

# CGSC Student Text 100-40

## *OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE*

# *TACTICS*

**7 JUNE 1999**



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Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate  
Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

## OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS

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## PREFACE

Tactics is the art and science of employing all available means to win battles and engagements. Specifically, it comprises the actions taken by a commander to arrange units and activities in relation to each other and the enemy. This student text focuses on the organization of forces, minimum essential control measures, and general planning, preparation, and execution considerations for each type and form of offensive and defensive action.

This student text introduces concepts associated with the art of tactics associated with the conduct of offensive and defensive actions. It cannot be read in isolation. To understand this text, the reader must understand the theory of operational level art, the principles of war, and the linkages between the operational and tactical levels of war described in FM 100-5, *Operations*. The reader should understand that during the conduct of operations a commander may or may not conduct offensive, defensive, stability, and support actions simultaneously. This conduct of simultaneous actions is more likely to occur at higher tactical echelons. The reader should understand the plan, prepare, execute, and assess cycle described in FM 100-34, *Command and Control*, and how that cycle relates to the military decision making process (MDMP) described in FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*. What follows in this text flows from these discussions and provides the foundation to understand the basics of tactical offensive and defensive actions and build tactical skill.

The ability to seize and secure terrain, with its populations and productive capacity, is the distinguishing characteristic of land forces conducting combat operations. This student text provides a common discussion of how commanders from the battalion task force through the corps echelon conduct offensive and defensive tactical actions and their supporting enabling operations. While it focuses on the tactics used to employ available means to win in combat, those tactics require judgment in application.

This student text has sixteen chapters and four appendices divided into four parts. Part I describes the Art and Science of Tactics, explains how the operational framework established in FM 100-5 applies at the tactical level, and defines common tactical concepts and control measures. ***(NOTE: Chapter 2 contains one approach to an operational framework designed to meet the full range of requirements of today's Army that, in accordance with the National Security Strategy, must remain engaged throughout the world while preparing for two major theaters of war. It is not the only approach to this subject and final decisions on this matter are pending within TRADOC doctrinal development channels. Chapter 2 is not authoritative in nature and should be regarded as an article presented for publication in a professional military journal.)*** Part II describes offensive operations. Within Part II, Chapter 4 discusses the basics of offensive operations. Each succeeding chapter discusses a specific type of offensive operations and builds upon those basics of the offensive found in Chapter 4. Likewise, in Part III, Chapter 9 discusses the basics of defensive operations with each succeeding chapter discussing a specific type of defensive operations.

Part IV discusses enabling operations, those operations conducted to assist the conduct of any of four types of military actions (offense, defense, stability, and support). Since combined arms reconnaissance operations, combined

arms breach operations, river crossing operations, and information operations are addressed in separate manuals (FM 100-55, FM 90-13-1, FM 90-13, and FM 100-6), that discussion is not repeated in this student text.

In this student text, the term *heavy* applies to Armored, Attack Aviation, Cavalry, and Mechanized Infantry combat arms elements. The term *light* applies to Airborne, Air Assault, and Light Infantry combat arms elements. The term *special operations forces* applies to Rangers, Special Forces, Special Operations Aviation, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations elements. The term *battalion* applies to a battalion, battalion task force, or a cavalry squadron unless differences in capabilities requires that a specific organization be named. The term *company* refers to a company, company team, battery, or troop size organization.

Unless otherwise stated, whenever this student text uses the masculine gender, both men and women are included.

Unless otherwise stated, whenever this student text uses the singular form of decisive operation or shaping operation; both the singular and plural forms are included.

The Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, US Army Command and General Staff College is the proponent for this student text. Send comments and recommended changes to Commander, US Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, ATTN: ATZL-SWW-P (Mr. Darling), Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352. The FAX number is (COM) (913) 684-4257/(DSN) 552-4257. Mr. Darling's phone number is DSN 552-3903. His email address is [darlingd@leav-emh1.army.mil].

# PART ONE: THE TACTICAL ART

## Chapter 1: The Art of Tactics

## Chapter 2: Land Force Dominance

## Chapter 3: Basic Tactical Concepts and Definitions



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*“I also knew how to take up a position for a division, or even an army corps, but the stupid little subaltern” game of the defense of a drift with a small detachment was, curiously enough, most perplexing.”*

**MG Swinton**, The Defense of Duffer’s Drift

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*“War is, above all things, an art, employing science in all its branches as its servant, but depending first and chiefly upon the skill of the artisan. It has its own rules, but not one of them is rigid and invariable. As new implements are devised new methods result in its mechanical execution, but over and above all its mechanical appliances it rests upon the complex factors of human nature, which cannot be reduced to formulas and rules.”*

CPT Francis V. Greene, 1882

## Chapter 1

# THE ART OF TACTICS

**Tactics is the art and science of employing available means to win battles and engagements. It is the employment of units in combat. It is the ordered arrangement and maneuver of units in relation to each other, the terrain, and the enemy to achieve their full lethality.**

**1-2.** This is the capstone manual for the tactical level of offensive and defensive actions.

This is a manual for professionals and requires dedication and study to master. It is authoritative and provides guidance in the form of combat-tested concepts and ideas modified to take advantage of emerging Army and joint capabilities, focusing on the tactics used to employ available means to win in combat. Those tactics are not prescriptive in nature but require judgment in application.

**1-3.** The principles of war are the fundamental truths governing combat operations. Their proper application is essential to the exercise of command and the successful conduct of military operations. The degree of application for each principle varies with the situation. Blind adherence to these principles does not guarantee success, but each deviation may increase the risk of failure. The principles of war lend rigor and focus to the purely creative aspects of tactics and

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### PRINCIPLES OF WAR

**Objective**  
**Offensive**  
**Mass**  
**Economy of Force**  
**Maneuver**  
**Unity of Command**  
**Security**  
**Surprise**  
**Simplicity**

provide a crucial link between pure theory and actual application. They are discussed in FM 100-5, *Operations*.

**1-4.** The tactics and supporting techniques and procedures described in this manual are only starting points for the tactician who must understand the difference between tactics and techniques and procedures.

**Tactics** are the arrangement of forces and capabilities on the battlefield.

**Techniques** are the general and detailed methods used by troops and commanders to perform assigned missions and functions, specifically, the methods of using equipment and personnel.

**Procedures** are standard and detailed courses of action that describe how to perform tasks.

Tactics always require judgment and adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Both techniques and procedures are established patterns that can be applied repeatedly with little or no judgment in a wide variety of circumstances. Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) provide the tactician with a set of tools to use in developing the solution to a tactical problem. The solution to any specific problem is a unique combination of these TTP or the creation of new ones based on a critical evaluation of the situation. The tactician determines his solution by a thorough mastery of doctrine and existing TTP, tempered and honed by experience gained through training and operations. He uses his creativity to develop solutions for which the enemy is neither prepared for, nor with which he can cope.

## THE TACTICAL LEVEL OF WAR

**1-5.** The levels of war are doctrinal perspectives that clarify the links between strategic objectives and tactical actions. Although there are no finite limits or boundaries between them, the three levels are strategic, operational, and tactical. They apply to all types of military actions.

**1-6. The tactical level of war is the level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives.** It is important to understand tactics within the context of the levels of war. The strategic and operational levels provide the context for tactical operations. Without this context, tactical operations are reduced to a series of disconnected and unfocused actions. Engagements are linked to battles. One or more battles are linked to winning major operations and cam-

paings, leading to operational success, which can lead to strategic success. (See FM 100-5 for a discussion of major operations and campaigns.)

**1-7. An engagement is a small, tactical conflict between opposing maneuver forces, usually conducted at brigade level and below.** An engagement normally lasts only a short time — minutes, hours, or a day. It can result from one side's deliberate offensive movement against an opponent or from a chance encounter between two opponents, such as a meeting engagement. An engagement can be a stand-alone event or one of several related engagements comprising a battle.

**1-8. A battle is a series of related tactical engagements that last longer and involve larger forces than an engagement.** It may affect the course of the campaign. A battle occurs when a division, corps, or army commander fights for one or more significant objectives. Battles are usually operationally significant, if not operationally decisive.

**1-9.** Levels of command, size of units, types of equipment, or types of forces or components are not associated with a particular level of war. National assets, such as intelligence and communications satellites, previously considered principally in a strategic context, are an important adjunct to tactical operations. Actions can be defined as strategic, operational, or tactical based on their effect or contribution to achieving strategic, operational, or tactical objectives, but many times the accuracy of these labels can only be determined during historical studies.

**1-10.** Advances in technology, information age media reporting, and the compression of time-space relationships contribute to the growing inter-relationships between the levels of war. The levels of war help commanders visualize a logical flow of operations, allocate resources, and assign tasks to the appropriate command. However, commanders at every level must be aware that in a world of constant, immediate communications, any single event may cut across the three levels. See FM 100-5, *Operations*, for a discussion of the other levels of war.

## THE SCIENCE AND ART OF TACTICS

**1-11.** The tactician must understand and master the science and the art of tactics, two distinctly different yet inseparable concepts.

### THE SCIENCE

**1-12. The science of tactics encompasses the understanding of those military aspects of tactics — capabilities, techniques, and procedures — that**

**can be measured and codified.** The science of tactics includes the physical capabilities of friendly and enemy organizations and systems, such as determining how long it takes a division to move a certain distance. It also includes techniques and procedures used to accomplish specific tasks, such as the tactical terms and control graphics that comprise the language of tactics. While not easy, the science of tactics is fairly straightforward. Much of what is contained in this manual is the science of tactics — techniques and procedures for employing the various elements of the combined arms team to achieve greater effects.

**1-13.** Mastery of the science of tactics is necessary for the tactician to understand the physical and procedural constraints under which he must work. These constraints include the effects of terrain, time, space, and weather on friendly and enemy forces. However — because combat is an intensely human activity — the solution to tactical problems cannot be reduced to a formula. This realization necessitates the study of the art of tactics.

## THE ART

**1-14. The art of tactics consists of three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decision making under conditions of uncertainty when faced with an intelligent enemy, and understanding the human dimension — the effects of combat on soldiers.** An art, as opposed to a science, requires the exercise of intuitive faculties that cannot be solely learned by study. The tactician's study must be tempered and his skill evolved through a wide variety of relevant, practical experiences. The more experience the tactician gains from practice under a variety of circumstances, the greater his mastery of the art of tactics.

**1-15.** The tactician invokes the art of tactics to solve tactical problems by choosing from interrelated options including:

- Types and forms of operations, forms of maneuver, and tactical tasks.
- Task organization of available forces, to include the allocation of scarce resources.
- Arrangement and choice of control measures.
- Tempo of the operation.
- Risks the commander is willing to take.

These options represent a starting point for the tactician to create a unique solution to a specific tactical problem. Each decision represents a choice among a range of options, each balances competing demands requiring judgment at every turn. While there may

be checklists for techniques and procedures, there are no checklists for solving tactical problems. The commander must not look for a checklist approach to tactics: instead, he must use his experience and creativity to outthink his enemy.

**1-16.** The first aspect of the art of tactics is the creative and flexible application of the tools available to the commander, such as doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, training, organizations, material, and soldiers, in an attempt to render the enemy's situational tactics ineffective. The factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC) are variables whose infinite mutations always combine to form a new tactical pattern. (Chapter 3 discusses the factors of METT-TC.) They never produce exactly the same situation; thus there can be no checklists that adequately address the unique situation. Because the enemy changes and adapts to friendly moves during the planning, preparation, and execution of an operation, there is no guarantee that a technique that worked in one situation will work again. Each tactical problem is unique and must be solved on its own merits.

**1-17.** The second aspect of the art of tactics is decision making under conditions of uncertainty and demonstrated by the clash of opposing wills — a violent struggle between two hostile, thinking, and independent opponents with irreconcilable goals. Each commander wants to impose his will on his opponent, defeat his opponent's plans, and destroy his opponent's forces. Combat consists of the interplay between these two opposing commanders, with each commander seeking to accomplish his mission while preventing the other from doing the same. The tactician needs a high degree of creativity and clarity of thought to outwit a willing and able opponent.

“... the conflagration of battle had lit the sky just north of us. But each of us in the headquarters unit had been so busy that we had not fully grasped the immensity of the struggle, or its destructiveness. But as the sky brightened, I looked around and saw hundreds and hundreds of burned and twisted vehicles. Fifty Israeli tanks lay shattered on the field. Around them were the hulks of 150 Egyptian tanks plus hundreds of APCs, jeeps, and trucks ... Here and there Israeli and Egyptian tanks had destroyed each other at a distance of a few meters, barrel to barrel. It was if a hand-to-hand battle of armor had taken place. And inside those tanks and next to them lay their dead crews ... you could see Egyptian and Jewish dead lying side by side, soldiers who had jumped from their burning tanks had died together. No picture could capture the horror of the scene; none could encompass what had happened there. On our side that night we had lost 300 dead and hundreds more wounded. The Egyptian losses were much, much heavier.”

**Ariel Sharon, *Warrior***

**1-18.** The third and final aspect of the art of tactics is understanding the human dimension — what differentiates actual combat from the problems encountered during training and in a classroom. Combat is one of the most complex human activities characterized by friction, uncertainty, and chance. Success depends at least as much on this human aspect as it does on any numerical and technological superiority.

**1-19.** These human aspects cannot be ignored. The tactician seeks to recognize and exploit indicators of fear and weakness in his enemy, and to defeat the enemy's will, since soldiers remain key to the generation of combat power. More than any other human activity, continuous combat operations against an intelligent enemy takes a toll on soldiers, severely straining their physical and mental stamina. This creates in soldiers the tangible and intangible effects of courage, fear, combat experience, exhaustion, isolation, confidence, thirst, and anger. If left unchecked, these effects can result in decreased vigilance, slowed perception, inability to concentrate, communication difficulties, and an inability to accomplish manual tasks.

**1-20.** Leaders must be alert to indicators of fatigue, fear, lapses in discipline standards, and reduced morale in friendly and enemy soldiers. They must work to counteract the effects on the friendly force while taking measures to enhance these effects on the enemy. When the friendly force has the initiative, it can force the enemy to conduct continuous operations to react to friendly actions and then exploit the effects of continuous operations on the enemy. These conditions can have a cumulative effect on units that can lead to collapse. The commander must understand how these effects impact human endurance and factor them into his plans. He must understand the limits of human endurance in combat. This is the subtle difference between pushing soldiers beyond their limits to exploit success versus resting them to prevent the collapse of unit cohesion. (Additional discussion concerning the effects of continuous combat operations is found in FM 100-34, *Command*.)

## **HISTORICAL EXAMPLE**

**1-21.** The following vignette discusses the American Revolutionary War Battle of Cowpens and illustrates the need for the tactician to combine the effects of the science of tactics with his application of the tactical art.

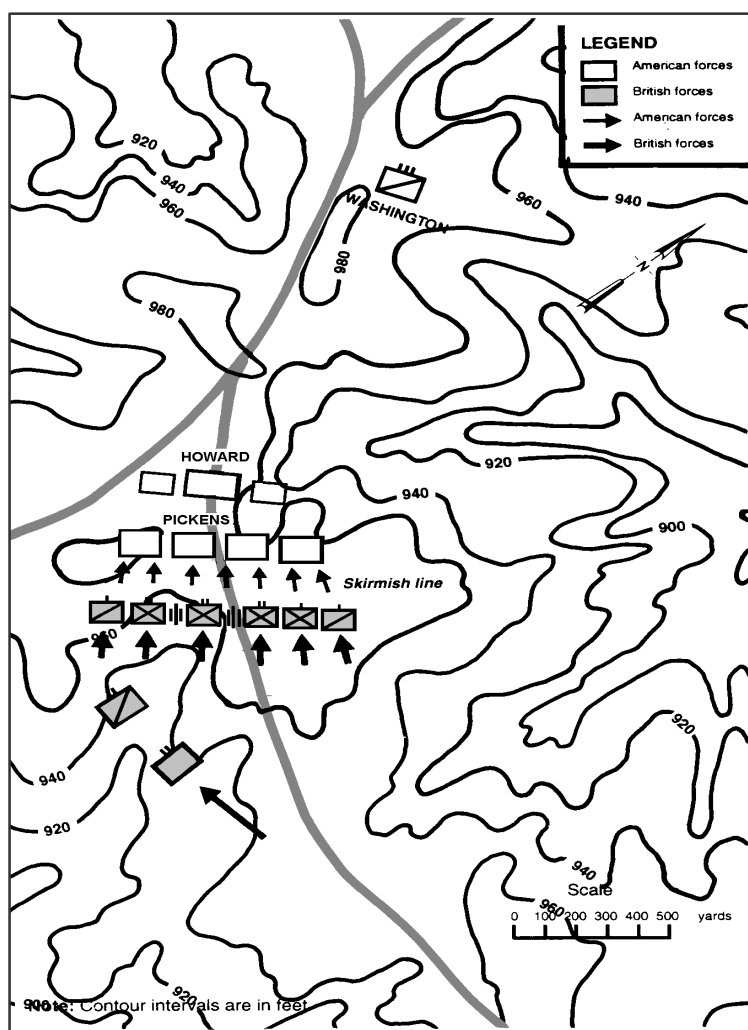
### COWPENS, 17 JANUARY 1781

On 17 January 1781, American BG Daniel Morgan defeated British LTC Tarleton at the Cowpens in South Carolina in a battle that captures the essence of the art of tactics — the use of intuitive faculties that cannot be learned solely by study. Although outnumbered, Morgan's troops fought and won against a previously unbeaten opponent. The battle achieved decisive results with strategic significance.

In December 1780, BG Morgan was sent with 600 men into the South Carolina highlands under orders to protect Americans, forage, and threaten British control of the highlands. His opponent's force, LTC Tarleton's British Legion numbered nearly 1,000 men and consisted of a combined cavalry-infantry force reinforced with additional infantry and two three-pounder guns, was sent in pursuit of Morgan. By 16 January 1781, Tarleton had closed to within six miles of Morgan's force.

Having known of Tarleton's mission since 14 January, Morgan obtained information on Tarleton's tactical style while he began to retreat. With Tarleton so close on 16 January and his own camp nearly six miles from the Broad River, Morgan decided to fight at the Cowpens. While the two forces were now roughly the same size, Morgan had only about one-third of the cavalry, one-third of the regular line infantry, and no artillery. However, his militia force's rifles had a longer range than the British muskets, and the terrain allowed him to mask his reserves from view. Morgan deployed his forces on the battlefield, confident that Tarleton would not attempt to flank his position. Rather, Morgan believed that Tarleton would initially attack him with part of his cavalry supported by infantry, wait for confusion, and then exploit those vulnerabilities with his cavalry reserve. This had been his pattern of operations in previous engagements with the Americans.

In the main line of battle, Morgan placed his Continentals and Virginia militia, who were former Continentals, on the military crest of the rise under COL Howard's command. They numbered 450. About 150 meters downhill, toward the expected reaction of the enemy, he stationed the bulk of his militia under the command of COL Pickens. Another 150 meters down the hill, he positioned a skirmisher line of 150 militia riflemen. Behind the hill, he placed LTC Washington's 120-strong cavalry force in reserve. Each line was within rifle range but out of musket range of the line behind it. As explained to his men the night before, skirmishers only needed to fire one or



two shots and then retire to the second line. In turn, the militia in the second line only needed to fire two volleys. Then they could retire to their left around to the rear of the hill and, protected by the cavalry, reform. The cavalry would counterattack British cavalry as the situation allowed, guard the militia horses, or cover a retreat if necessary.

Tarleton deployed his forces from their march formation into a line, with three light infantry companies on the right, the Legion infantry in the center, and one regular British battalion on the left of this main line. He stationed one troop of cavalry on each flank of the main line, and one, three-pounder gun on either side of the Legion infantry. He kept the other regular British battalion and the remainder of his Legion cavalry in reserve. The British immediately came under fire from the skirmishers. Tarleton sent a troop of dragoons to disperse them while his main forces deployed. The dragoons lost 15 of 50 men. The skirmishers retired to the American second line.

Tarleton then assaulted the second line. His artillery opened fire, but apparently on the third line. The American rifle fire disrupted his formation. When his forces closed to within 50 meters of the second line, they received a volley from the militia that staggered and further disrupted his forces. The expected second volley from the militia was more ragged as the militia began to withdraw. Seeing this movement, Tarleton ordered his right-hand troop of dragoons to charge the militia as it withdrew. The American cavalry charged this troop and overwhelmed it, driving the dragoons off the field in accordance with Morgan's plan.

As the British moved hastily forward to assault the main American position, they further lost their cohesion as a firefight between the two forces ensued. Tarleton ordered his reserve infantry battalion up to the left of his line for this assault, and the cavalry troop on his left to encircle the American line. This move out flanked the American line. Morgan and the third-line commander recognized the danger to their right flank and ordered the right flank units to "refuse" the flank. However, the American units adjoining those right flank units also commenced moving to the rear. This situation could have crumbled the American line except for Morgan's personal order for the rest of the American line to move to the rear with those right flank units.

Seeing this apparent general withdrawal, Tarleton ordered his forces to close with the Americans. They did, but suffered further disorganization. Just as the British attempted to close, the Americans turned and fired a volley, followed by a bayonet charge into the British lines. Simultaneously, Morgan's cavalry attacked the British right from the rear. Meanwhile, the militia, having reformed, returned to the field on the American right and attacked the British left flank units. The battle was over within an hour of Tarleton's first assault. The British losses were 110 killed, 200 wounded, and 700 prisoners, although Tarleton personally escaped with about 140 of his cavalry. The British could not replace the mobile forces that Tarleton lost at the Cowpens. Without a mobile force, the British could no longer have an effective counter to American partisans and light forces in operations. They won battles, such as Guilford Court House, with conventional forces but lost the campaign.

BG Morgan combined the science of tactics with his application of the tactical art to defeat superior numbers of British forces under Tarleton. Morgan arrived at a unique and creative solution to the tactical problem facing him through his application of the science of tactics. He used the information he had about how Tarleton would react, his own forces, and his surroundings. He did not ask any more of any part of his force than it was capable of, but he used it to its fullest capabilities. When Morgan combined the science of tactics with his understanding of the tactical art he achieved victory. His personal leadership in executing the plan was crucial, especially when his third line mistakenly retired.

## HASTY VERSUS DELIBERATE OPERATIONS

**1-22. A *hasty operation* is an operation in which a commander directs his immediately available forces, using fragmentary orders (FRAGOs), to perform activities with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation**



time for speed of execution. A *deliberate operation* is an operation in which a commander's detailed intelligence concerning the situation allows him to develop and coordinate detailed plans, including multiple branches and sequels, task organize his forces specifically for the operation to provide a fully synchronized combined arms team, conduct extensive rehearsals, and extensive shaping of the battlefield takes place. Most operations lie somewhere along a continuum between two extremes. The 9<sup>th</sup> Armored Division's seizure of the bridge at Remagen in March 1945 illustrates one end; a hasty operation conducted with the forces immediately available. At the other end of the continuum is a deliberate operation, such as World War II's Operation OVERLORD, the Normandy invasion. Ongoing improvements of control and intelligence systems continue to refine the commander's situational understanding of both friendly and enemy forces while facilitating the decision-making process and the communication of decisions to friendly forces. These technological improvements can help diminish the distinction between hasty and deliberate operations; they cannot make that distinction irrelevant.

#### CHOICE AND TRADEOFFS

**1-23.** The commander must be able to choose the right point along the continuum to operate. His choice involves balancing several competing factors. The commander's decision to conduct a hasty or deliberate operation is based on his current knowledge of the enemy situation and his assessment of whether or not the assets available (to include time), and the means to coordinate and synchronize those assets, are adequate to accomplish the mission. If they are not, he takes additional time to plan and prepare for the operation or bring additional forces to bear on the problem. That choice is always made in an environment of uncertainty and always entails some risk.

**1-24.** Uncertainty and risk are inherent in tactical operations and cannot be eliminated. A commander cannot be successful without the capability of acting under conditions of uncertainty, while balancing various risks and taking advantage of opportunities. While the commander strives to maximize his knowledge about his forces, the terrain and weather, and the enemy, he cannot let a lack of information paralyze him. The more intelligence on the enemy, the better able the commander is to make his assessment. Less information means that the commander has a greater risk of making a poor decision for the specific situation. A commander never has perfect intelligence, but knowing when

he has enough information to make a decision within the higher commander's intent and constraints is part of the art of tactics and is a critical skill for a commander.

**1-25.** The commander should take the minimum time necessary in planning and preparing to ensure a reasonable chance of success. Reduced coordination at the start of the operation results in less than optimum combat power being brought to bear on the enemy, but often allows for increased speed and momentum. The effects of reduced coordination must be balanced against the risk that the effects of increased coordination will not match the enemy's improved posture over time. The more time the commander takes to prepare for the operation, including improving his situational understanding, the more time the enemy has to prepare and move additional units within supporting range or distance. Additionally, it reduces the time his subordinates have to conduct their own planning and preparations. If the enemy can improve his disposition faster than the friendly force can, the delays in execution decrease the commander's chances of success.

**1-26.** All else being equal, it is better to err on the side of speed, audacity, and momentum than on the side of caution when conducting military operations. Bold decisions give the best promise of success; however, one must differentiate between calculated risks and a military gamble. **A *calculated risk* is an operation in which success is not a certainty but which, in case of failure, leaves sufficient forces to cope with whatever situations arise.** The willingness to take calculated risks requires military judgment to reduce risk by foresight and careful planning and to determine whether the risk is worth taking to grasp fleeting opportunities. MG Wood's decision to advance east toward the German border with his 4<sup>th</sup> Armor Division after the breakout from the Normandy beachhead is an example of a justifiable calculated risk. **A *military gamble* is an operation that can lead either to victory or to complete destruction of one's force.** Rare situations can arise where even a gamble may be justified; for example, when defeat is merely a matter of time and the only chance lies in an operation of great risk. LTC Chamberlain's decision to conduct a bayonet charge with what was left of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg is an example of a justifiable military gamble.

**1-27.** The commander can be less deliberate in planning and preparing for an operation when facing a less-capable and less-prepared enemy force. In these circumstances, the commander can forego detailed planning, extensive rehearsals, and significant changes in task organization. For example, an attacking battalion task force encountering enemy

security outposts just moving into position will conduct actions on contact to immediately overrun the outposts without the loss of momentum. It then follows that against a larger and more prepared enemy, the commander needs more preparation time and a larger force to succeed. If the commander determines that he cannot defeat the enemy with the forces immediately at hand, he must determine what additional measures he must take to be successful. The measures can include any or all of the factors along the continuum.

**1-28.** Reduced synchronization at the start of the operation generally results in less than the optimum employment of the effects of combat power against an enemy. During execution, the commander must balance the time loss against the risk that increased synchronization will not match the enemy's improved posture over time. The more time the commander takes to prepare for the operation, including gathering additional intelligence, the more time the enemy has to prepare and move additional units within supporting distance. If the enemy can improve his disposition faster than the friendly force can, friendly delays in execution decrease chances of success. The commander should take the minimum time necessary to ensure a reasonable chance of success.

**1-29.** This does not imply that a commander conducting a hasty operation foregoes the advantages provided by his combined arms team. A commander who chooses to conduct hasty operations synchronizes the employment of his forces in his head as he issues FRAGOs. He uses intangible factors, such as his experience, perception of how the enemy will react, understanding of time-distance factors, and knowledge of the strengths of each subordinate and supporting unit to achieve the required degree of synchronization.

## **RISK REDUCTION**

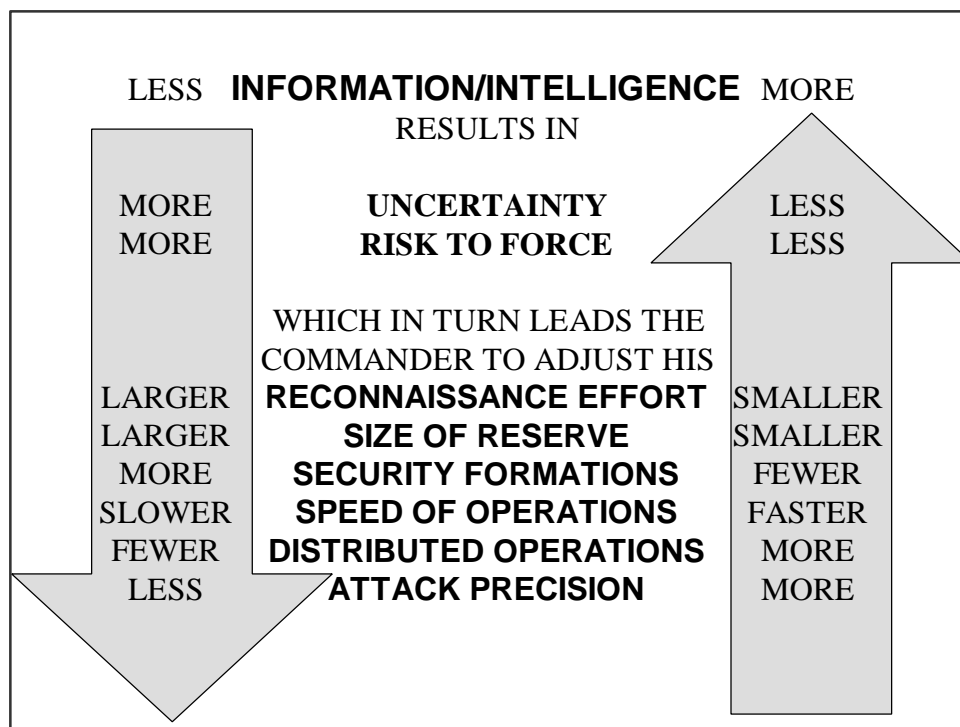
**1-30.** An important factor in reducing a commander's risk is how much intelligence he has about the enemy. As intelligence becomes available, the commander determines where along the continuum he will operate to accomplish his mission. There is no set of rules to determine this point; any choice entails risk. If the commander decides to execute a hasty operation based on limited intelligence, he risks an uncoordinated operation against an enemy about which he knows little and with forces that may not be strong enough to accomplish their mission with minimum casualties. This could lead to piecemeal commitment and potential defeat in detail. He must balance this option against the risk of waiting to attack, which allows the enemy time to reinforce or conduct additional preparation.

**1-31.** When higher headquarters determines the time to start an operation, or in a defense when the enemy initiates the operation, the commander has little flexibility regarding where to operate along the continuum. In these situations he must use all the time available to conduct planning and preparation. While the steps of the military decision making process (MDMP) used in a time-constrained environment are the same as in the full process, many may be done mentally by the commander or with less staff involvement. The commander decides how to shorten the process. A commander may use the complete process to develop the plan, while a subordinate headquarters abbreviates the process. See FM 101-5 for a discussion of decision making in a time-constrained environment.

**1-32.** The commander can reduce the risk associated with any situation by increasing his knowledge of the terrain and friendly, neutral, and enemy forces. He has a greater risk of making a poor decision if his situational understanding is incomplete or faulty. If the commander lacks sufficient information to make an informed choice, his first priority must be to gain the required information to support his decision making while at the same time taking precautions to protect his force from surprise. During an unexpected encounter with the enemy, often an acceptable way to gain that intelligence is to conduct a hasty attack or a reconnaissance in force to determine the size and disposition of the enemy force. The commander adapts his reconnaissance and intelligence efforts to the existing situation and picks the appropriate tools to answer his critical information requirements. For example, the commander can retask his reconnaissance assets or increase the size of his reconnaissance effort.

**1-33.** Risk reduction does not always mean increasing knowledge of the enemy at the expense of time. A commander can partially compensate for a lack of intelligence by being flexible in his troop dispositions through an increase in the depth of the security area, size and number of security units, and size of the reserve. The commander's choices of combat and movement formations provide the versatility to allow for initial contact with the smallest possible friendly force. This allows the greatest flexibility in meeting unforeseen enemy dispositions. Another way to compensate for increased risk is to allow time and resources for subordinate elements to develop the situation.

**1-34.** Because uncertainty exists in all military operations, every military decision contains risk. The commander exercises the tactical art when he decides how much risk to accept. As shown in Figure 1-1, the commander has several techniques available to reduce the risk associated in a specific operation. Some of these techniques for reducing



**Figure 1-1. Risk Reduction Factors**

risk take resources from the decisive operation, which reduces the concentration of effects at the decisive point.

**1-35.** The commander has the option to redirect the efforts of forces previously used to reduce his risk toward strengthening the decisive operation as more information becomes available. In any operation, the relationship between information, uncertainty, risk, size of reserves and security forces, and the disposition of the main body may change frequently. The commander must continually weigh this balance and make adjustments as needed.

**1-36.** These adjustments can create problems. Too many or too rapid changes in task organization, mission, and priorities can have negative effects on the plan, prepare, and execute cycle. For example, if a commander changes the task organization of his force too frequently, the force fails to develop the flexibility provided by teamwork. If he fails to change the task organization when dictated by circumstances, the force lacks flexibility to adapt to those changing circumstances. It is then unable to react effectively to enemy moves or act with the concentration of effects that lead to mission success.

## SOLVING TACTICAL PROBLEMS

**1-37.** Tactical success comes from the aggressive, intelligent, and decisive use of combat power in an environment of uncertainty, disorder, violence, and danger. The tactician maximizes friendly and minimizes enemy combat power by preventing the enemy from fighting as a combined arms force. The tactician who employs the better tactics has a distinct advantage over his opponent, even if their forces have equal combat power. To win, the tactician seizes, retains, and exploits the initiative by:

- Maneuvering more rapidly than the enemy to gain positional advantage (the place where fires are most effective) over the enemy.
- Employing firepower to facilitate and exploit positional advantage.
- Sustaining friendly forces before, during, and after the engagement with the enemy.

Sound tactics employ all available combat, combat support, and combat service support where they will make the greatest contribution to victory.

**1-38.** To employ available means to win battles and engagements, the tactician must solve a tactical problem to accomplish the assigned mission by choosing from a number of tactical options to create a solution. (Chapter 3 lists these options as the types of military actions, types of operations, and forms of operations.) Although he solves the specific tactical problem facing him by following the general principles outlined in this manual, there is no one doctrinally correct, procedurally derived solution to any problem.

**1-39.** The tactician uses his mastery of the art and science of tactics, his understanding of the situation, and his judgment to create unique solutions appropriate to the mission and the other specific factors of METT-TC. There are usually several solutions that might work, although some will be more effective. The tactician seeks a solution that defeats the enemy in the time available at the least cost in men and material. It should be a decisive solution that postures the unit for future missions and provides for the greatest flexibility to account for unexpected enemy actions or reactions. The solution must be in accordance with the higher commander's intent.

**1-40.** The tactician learns to cut to the heart of a situation, recognize its decisive elements, and base his decisions on those decisive elements as he masters his profession. The ability to do this cannot be acquired overnight. The tactician develops this capability after years of schooling, self-study, and practical training experiences, which eventually develop the intuitive faculties required to solve tactical problems. He rarely

gets the opportunity to practice the science and art of tactics under actual combat conditions because wars occur infrequently.

**1-41.** Doctrine requires human judgment when applied to a specific situation. In choosing a solution to a tactical problem, applicable laws and regulations, the mission, the laws of physics, human behavior, and logistical realities constrain the tactician, not standardized techniques and procedures. The true test of the tactician's solution is not whether it uses the specific techniques or procedures contained in this manual, but whether the techniques and procedures used were appropriate to the situation. Tactical proficiency is not defined by mastery of written doctrine, but by the ability to employ available means to win battles and engagements. A solution may not match any previous doctrinal example; however, the language used to communicate that concept must be technically precise and doctrinally consistent, using commonly understood and accepted doctrinal terms and concepts.

**1-42.** Solutions to tactical problems are a collective effort. Success results from the commander's plan and the ability of subordinates to execute. The commander must have full confidence in his subordinates' mastery of the art and science of tactics and in their ability to execute the chosen solution. (See FM 100-34, *Command and Control*, for a full discussion of this concept.)

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*NOTE: Chapter 2 contains one approach to an battlefield organization designed to meet the full range of requirements of today's Army that, in accordance with the National Security Strategy, must remain engaged throughout the world while preparing for two major theaters of war. It is not the only approach to this subject and final decisions on this matter are pending within TRADOC doctrinal development channels. Chapter 2 is not authoritative in nature and should be regarded as an article presented for publication in a professional military journal."*

## Chapter 2

# LAND FORCE DOMINANCE

**Land Force Dominance consists of those actions and functions executed throughout the height, width, and depth of an area of operations designed to accomplish the assigned mission. These actions and functions may be executed against a single decisive point, simultaneously against multiple decisive points, or sequentially against multiple decisive points based on the factors of METT-TC.**

**2-2.** Land Force Dominance is the Army's basic operational concept and applies to all four types of military actions: offense, defense, stability, and

support. This concept describes how a commander should think about operations using the battlefield organization and operational continuum introduced in this chapter. Command remains a combination of art and science. The art is necessary because the commander must apply doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures using the operational continuum and battlefield organization in a wide variety of situations and scenarios.

**2-3.** The goal of Land Force Dominance is to accomplish the mission through simultaneous precision operations distributed in space against multiple objectives, but concentrated in time to break the moral and coherence of the enemy force and cause its defeat through disintegration, not through attrition. Each operation creates an effect, the sum of which is greater than if each operation were discrete. Ideally, those components of the enemy's combined arms team that remain are significantly reduced in effectiveness because the enemy commander is unable to coordinate their effects effectively. Even if part of the enemy force continues to fight, the commander can destroy those isolated

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remnants with relative ease because he has eliminated their ability to fight as a combined arms team.

**2-5.** Figure 2-1 depicts what is new about Land Force Dominance. These differences between current and previous doctrine change how a commander plans, prepares, and executes operations to defeat an enemy and accomplish his mission.

**2-6.** The Army adopted Land Force Dominance as its umbrella concept in reaction to the opportunities and dangers found in today's dynamic security environment. The disappearance of an

echeloned, heavy threat in Central Europe negated the utility of a geographically based battlefield organization (such as deep, close, and rear) that a commander could not readily apply to the increasing numbers of stability and support actions performed by Army units. Technology provides the commander with information systems that allow the non-hierarchical dissemination of intelligence, targeting, and other data and can lead to superior situational understanding. Advances in information systems also facilitate the commander's capability to synchronize the effects of his combat power and assist in task organizing his forces for the mission and terrain within his area of operations. Technology allows commanders to simultaneously target and engage with precision and overwhelming force multiple decisive points using smart weapon systems and munitions from widely dispersed locations. For more information concerning the contemporary security environment see Chapter 1 of FM 100-5.

**2-7.** This concept requires the commander use mission command; it requires that all subordinate unit commanders understand the commander's intent and share a common operational picture. For a discussion of mission command see FM 100-34.

**2-8.** Land Force Dominance exploits the potential for multiple, simultaneous, decisive operations to overwhelm the enemy. The commander bases his decision to conduct multiple, simultaneous, decisive operations on his situational understanding and the relative combat power of the opposing forces. That decision balances the potential gains against the danger of defeat in detail. Ordinarily, divisions are the smallest echelon that com-

- **BATTLEFIELD ORGANIZATION CONSISTING OF DECISIVE, SHAPING, AND SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS.**
- **DECISIVE OPERATIONS CAN OCCUR ANYWHERE ON THE BATTLEFIELD**
- **OPERATIONAL CONTINUUM DEFINED BY:**
  - **NUMBER OF DECISIVE OPERATIONS.**
  - **SEQUENCING OF DECISIVE OPERATION(S).**
  - **ORGANIZATION OF THE AO (CONTIGUOUS/NONCONTIGUOUS, AREAS OF OPERATIONS).**

**Figure 2-1. What is New About Land Force Dominance**

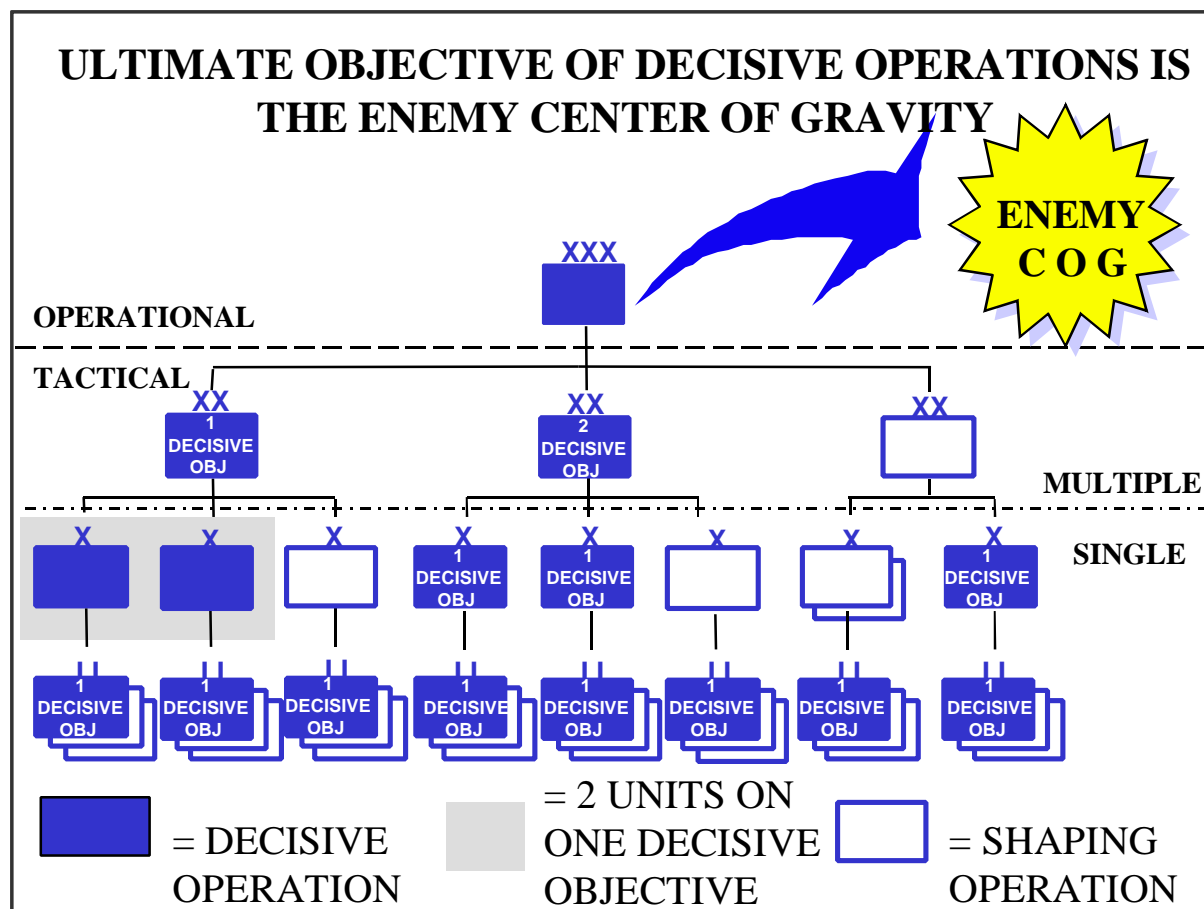
mand and control multiple, simultaneous, decisive operations in offensive and defensive actions.

## BATTLEFIELD ORGANIZATION

**2-9.** The battlefield organization facilitates the commander's execution of simultaneous operations by providing a way to visualize how to employ his forces against the enemy. It helps the commander relate his subordinate forces to one another, to the mission, and to the enemy in terms of time, space, resources, and purpose. This framework also assists in establishing geographical areas of operation necessary for accomplishing specific tactical tasks, such as a river crossing operation. The ongoing modernization of information systems architecture and weapon systems assists the commander to plan, prepare, and execute simultaneous combat operations.

**2-10.** A battlefield organization consisting of decisive, shaping, and sustainment operations replaces the previous battlefield organization of deep, close, and rear operations established in 1982. (However, commanders can still use the terms *deep* and *close* to refer to the geographical relationship of friendly and enemy forces.) The components of the battlefield organization (decisive, shaping, and sustainment) are based on the effects they achieve, not who does them and their geographical location within an area of operations. The commander can use any of his available assets to accomplish the desired effects. For example, an attack aviation unit engaging the enemy reserve would be a shaping operation if its actions establish those conditions necessary to defeat another enemy force in either current or future operations. Alternatively, it could be a decisive operation if it results in the collapse of the enemy's combat forces and supporting structures. The battlefield organization also replaces the terms *main* and *supporting efforts* with the terms *decisive* and *shaping*, allowing the commander to establish priorities and guide the allocation of resources.

**2-11.** Decisive and shaping operations are nested, ultimately focusing on the enemy center of gravity. While corps is normally the highest tactical headquarters, it is depicted in Figure 2-2 as the highest army headquarters in the joint operations area in an operational role, since a center of gravity is an operational concept. The figure illustrates the fact that divisions are normally the lowest headquarters that will execute multiple simultaneous decisive operations in combat. Each brigade shown has no more than one decisive operation. As depicted on the left, two or more units may be involved in the conduct of a decisive operation. The higher headquarters retains the responsibility for the allocation of resources when this occurs. For example, the division retains control of CAS sorties and directs those sorties in support of both subordinate units' efforts. The



middle division is simultaneously directing multiple brigades in multiple decisive operations. The right division is conducting shaping operations with one of its brigades conducting a decisive operation in support of the division's shaping operation.

**2-12.** Using this battlefield organization, missions are still expressed in terms of *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. (See FM 100-34 for a discussion of mission statements.) The battlefield organization does not provide the *what* of an operation. It helps to explain the *why* in terms of the higher commander's intent. The commander should not attempt to use the terms of the battlefield organization to express the *who*, *what*, or *where* of the mission statement.

## DECISIVE OPERATIONS

**2-13. Decisive operations are those actions applying military capabilities to accomplish the most important task and purpose at a given time, whose success will make the most difference in the accomplishment of the higher commander's mission.** The commander designates activities that directly accom-

plish his mission as his decisive operation(s) in his concept of operations. Every decisive operation has a objective. (See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the objective as a graphic control measure.)

**2-14.** In offensive and defensive actions, decisive operations consist of all actions taken to overwhelm an enemy force or to seize or retain terrain leading directly to mission accomplishment. Ground maneuver forces, supported by indirect fires, are the commander's primary means of forcing the enemy to operate beyond his culminating point, thus exploiting the effects of decisive operations.

**2-15.** In stability actions or support actions, decisive operations achieve the immediate military objective of the campaign. Such actions could include disarming opposing factions in a conflict, opening LOCs for humanitarian assistance, evacuating noncombatants, implementing a peace agreement, or supporting a host nation rebuilding effort. In the conduct of stability actions or support actions, CSS operations that achieve the mission of the force may be decisive. (See FM 100-20 for additional discussion of stability actions or support actions.)

**2-16.** The commander integrates the effects of his combined arms team as it conducts operations at a tempo that the enemy cannot endure and survive. He must be able to shift his decisive operations quickly to take advantage of opportunities as they are discovered or created. This allows him to achieve a rapid defeat of the enemy force.

**2-17.** The commander weights the combat power of his decisive operation or decisive operations to direct overwhelming effects against the objective or objectives of his decisive operation or operations. Weighting the decisive operation is more than minor adjustments to combat power. The commander applies the principle of economy of force to all shaping operations to weight his decisive operation or operations. A near-equal distribution of combat power and supporting assets to the decisive and all shaping operations is the same as not designating a decisive operation. This normally requires the commander take some risk in the conduct of his shaping operations to provide the decisive operation with overwhelming combat power. If a commander designates the activities of a subordinate unit or units as the decisive operation within an operation, he has a responsibility to provide that subordinate unit or units access to the effects of all assets necessary to ensure success. The commander can use the following techniques to ensure that the effects of overwhelming combat power are available to subordinates conducting decisive operations:

- Narrowing the boundaries or decreasing the size of the area of operations of the unit conducting the decisive operation to increase the concentration of combat power.

- Reinforcing the decisive operation with extra combat power.
- Allocating priority for CS and CSS to the decisive operation.
- Planning employment options for reserves to support the decisive operation.
- Conducting shaping operations to fix enemy forces outside the area of the decisive operation.
- Sequencing actions.
- Phasing operations.

**2-18.** Statement of the mission and intent of a decisive operation focuses the efforts of subordinate units. The decisive operations of subordinate echelons support the higher echelon's designated decisive operation. When the commander designates a decisive operation, his subordinates focus their actions on his intent. This helps them and their staffs set priorities, allocate resources, synchronize effects, determine risks, and promote unity of effort.

**2-19.** Decisive operations can occur anywhere on the battlefield. For example, circumstances could arise where a commander can achieve decision purely through the effects of long-range precision fires. However, maneuver forces, supported by indirect fires, are the commander's primary means of forcing the enemy to operate beyond his culminating point, thus exploiting the effects of decisive operations.

## SHAPING OPERATIONS

**2-20. Shaping operations consist of all actions applying military capabilities to set the conditions for decisive operations.** The goal of shaping operations is to reduce the enemy's capability to fight in a coherent manner before or while the commander executes one or more decisive operations. Successful shaping operations conducted prior to the start of combat operations may be decisive by precluding the need to conduct decisive combat operations. The commander should clearly state how the mission he gives to a unit conducting a shaping operation assists the decisive operation. A commander allocates only minimum essential combat power to his shaping operations to ensure that each decisive operation has overwhelming combat power.

**2-21.** In offensive and defensive actions, shaping operations include actions that deny the enemy the use of terrain and the electromagnetic spectrum, destroy or degrade his essential capabilities (especially his command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance [C<sup>4</sup>ISR], logistics, fire support, and air defense), and isolate key elements of his force. They also include the movement of friendly forces to positions of advantage from which to launch decisive operations. Reconnaissance, security, and the actions of the reserve prior to its commitment are normally shaping operations.

1           **2-22.** Another example of shaping operations includes the use of fires to eliminate  
2 enemy critical capabilities while sensors and reconnaissance assets locate and track the  
3 enemy's decisive operation. The commander can then fix or contain enemy units through  
4 the use of fires, blocking positions, situational obstacles, offensive information  
5 operations, and offensive maneuver.

6           **2-23.** The commander uses his situational understanding to direct his forces conducting  
7 shaping operations to get the maximum effect from minimum resources. Instead, the  
8 commander assesses the results of shaping operations and exploits or reacts appropriately  
9 to the specific situation. He also plans, prepares, and executes follow-on shaping  
10 operations as necessary.

11           **2-24.** In stability actions or support actions, shaping operations include actions to create  
12 conditions that facilitate long-term stability and/or return to normal conditions. Shaping  
13 operations during stability actions or support actions might include:

- 14           ● Conducting offensive information operations to explain to civilians located  
15           within and external to the AO why US forces are engaged in the action.
- 16           ● Using engineers to repair infrastructure.
- 17           ● Preventing confrontation between opposing factions.
- 18           ● Preventing factions from upsetting the return to stability by the conduct of  
19           combat actions aimed at specific targets.

20           **2-25.** The commander must remember that decisive operations are his primary method  
21 for achieving success. However, a shaping operation can turn into a decisive operation if  
22 it achieves unexpected success. This implies that the commander in the situation shifts  
23 priorities and resources as a result of this redesignation.

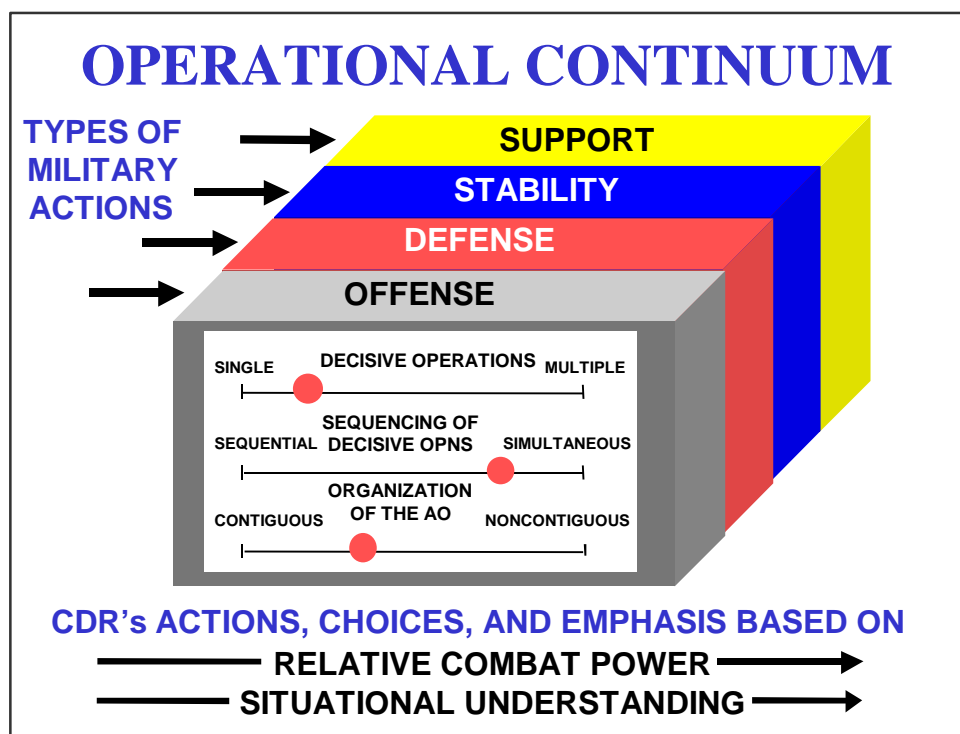
## 24   **SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS**

25           **2-26.** Sustainment operations include logistics and CSS operations to support  
26 friendly forces and the security and maintenance of the sustainment base to include  
27 lines of communication. Sustainment operations are as vital to the commander as  
28 decisive and shaping operations. By their nature, sustainment operations are not decisive;  
29 however, failure in these operations can cause the overall effort to fail. The commander's  
30 use of his CSS assets to support other governmental agencies and volunteer  
31 organizations; such as what occurs during the conduct of humanitarian relief, may be  
32 decisive in stability actions and support actions.

## 33   **OPERATIONAL CONTINUUM**

34           **2-27.** Security challenges facing the Army demand that commanders change the way  
35 they think about operations. Land Force Dominance takes place in an operational  
36 continuum defined by the:

- Number of decisive operations (single or multiple).
- Sequence of decisive operations (simultaneous or sequential).
- Organization of the area of operations (contiguous or noncontiguous areas of operation).



**Figure 2-3. Operational Continuum**

**2-28.** Figure 2-3 demonstrates the tremendous range of choices available to the commander based on the number of decisive operations he can conduct, the sequence of decisive operations (if there are more than one objective associated with the operation), and the way the commander organizes his area of operations. Army forces operate somewhere within this continuum. There are no rules that determine where a commander should operate within this operational continuum. The commander chooses where he conducts his operations based upon his situational understanding of the factors of METT-TC and his relative combat power. That choice is always made in an environment of uncertainty and always entails some risk. He creates a shared situational understanding with his subordinates by the use of doctrine and a common operational picture made possible by his information systems.

**2-29.** This operational continuum applies to all types of military actions. Commanders conducting more than one type of military action at a time can find themselves at different points within the continuum for each type of military action. For example, an



attacking commander conducting simultaneous decisive operations directed against multiple objectives from noncontiguous locations may also be conducting support actions from noncontiguous locations to assist the civilian survivors of an enemy chemical weapons attack on a key port. Note that the organization of the area of operations is the same for all types of military actions at a given time.

## SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DECISIVE OPERATIONS

**2-30.** Tactical situations normally present more potential opportunities than a commander can feasibly control or resource. A commander decides which potential opportunities that he will exploit through his employment of the art of tactics to:

- Select which objective or objectives he will attack or defend.
- Translate those opportunities into one or more objectives. (These objectives can be either terrain- or force-oriented.)
- Express that objective or objectives in terms of mission and intent to his subordinate commanders.
- Express that objective or those objectives to his staff in terms of targets, time, and geography.

Not all objectives are the goal of decisive operations; shaping operations are also assigned objectives.

**2-31.** The commander weights his decisive operations to concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power on his objective. If he does not have the required degree of situational understanding and relative combat power to be confident that each of his decisive operations can overwhelm the enemy and achieve its objective, he does not conduct multiple simultaneous decisive operations. This prevents the commander's defeat in detail against an enemy capable of effectively countering the friendly force's decisive operations.

## SEQUENCING OF DECISIVE OPERATIONS

**2-32.** The commander's concept of operations describes how he visualizes the operation unfolding. The concept is based on the commander's selected course of action against an enemy, whether the actions occur simultaneously or sequentially. The intent is to destroy or disrupt the enemy's key capabilities and functions and exploit the resulting advantage before the enemy can react. The result should be an enemy that knows he cannot win.

**2-33.** Although the factors of METT-TC may not require the conduct of multiple simultaneous decisive operations, corps and division commanders routinely have the resources to simultaneously conduct multiple decisive operations in overwhelming strength directed against objectives located throughout their areas of operations. To prevent defeat in detail — unless extremely unusual circumstances exist — brigade and

smaller-size units conduct one, and only one, decisive operation at any given time. In almost every case at the battalion echelon and below it takes everything the commander has to coordinate the massing of his available combat power to achieve overwhelming effects against one objective at a time.

### **Simultaneous Operations**

**2-34.** Simultaneous operations are the concurrent application of military force to attack multiple objectives. It allows a single operation to result in the disintegration of an enemy force. Presenting the enemy commander with so many crises that he cannot effectively respond to them all also allows the commander to seize or retain the initiative. The commander determines the objectives and the sequence of actions required to overwhelm the enemy's combat and support structures to cause the enemy's disintegration through the planning process.

### **Sequential Operations**

**2-35.** If the factors of METT-TC do not permit the commander to simultaneously target all of the objectives required to accomplish the mission in a single operation, he designs his operation to sequentially attack multiple smaller sets of objectives. If the commander sequences his operations, he should do so at an operational tempo that does not allow the enemy time to respond before being attacked again. Sequential attacks executed in rapid succession may have nearly the same effect as simultaneous operations.

**2-36.** The commander may shift his decisive operation deliberately by phases, he may shift it to respond to enemy actions, or to take advantage of opportunities. The associated operations order must identify the conditions that cause the shift from one phase to another if they can be identified ahead of time. This shifting should be an integral part of the rehearsal. When the echelon's decisive operation shifts, the commander normally shifts his allocation of combat power and support, and priorities of support to the newly designated decisive operation. The ability to shift the decisive operation quickly and smoothly is key to maintaining the momentum of tactical operations and exploiting successes.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE AREA OF OPERATION**

**2-37.** A commander visualizes his area of operations to establish the relationship of friendly subordinate forces to one another and to the enemy in time, space, resources, and purpose. For geometrical reasons, it is usually easier for a commander to conduct multiple simultaneous decisive operations from noncontiguous location than it is from contiguous locations. Once the commander decides on the purpose and relationship of battlefield activities, he determines how to arrange them within the height, width, and

depth of his AO. This arrangement is in accordance with his situational understanding, the relevant combat power, and the factors of METT-TC. The commander's options range from a contiguous area of operation with a clearly defined geometry to a noncontiguous area of operations where units are not adjacent to one other and have no linear relationship, or a mixture of the two. (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of contiguous and noncontiguous areas of operation.)

#### SITUATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

**2-38.** Situational understanding results from the commander's application of his military judgment to an operational picture. With a more complete situational understanding, a commander has more options to conduct multiple decisive operations without assuming excessive risk. The commander uses his situational understanding to direct the actions of his units. See FM 100-6 for a more detailed discussion of situational understanding.

#### RELATIVE COMBAT POWER

**2-39. Relative combat power is the ratio between the available combat power of two opposing forces.** The more favorable the ratio of relative combat power, the more options the commander has available to conduct operations on the distributed side of the operational continuum without assuming excessive risk. The determination of relative combat power takes into account all available combat multipliers, such as leadership, training, and information operations. FM 34-130 contains information a commander can use to start determining relative combat power. The commander constantly revises his initial planning determination of his relative combat power as the operation unfolds.

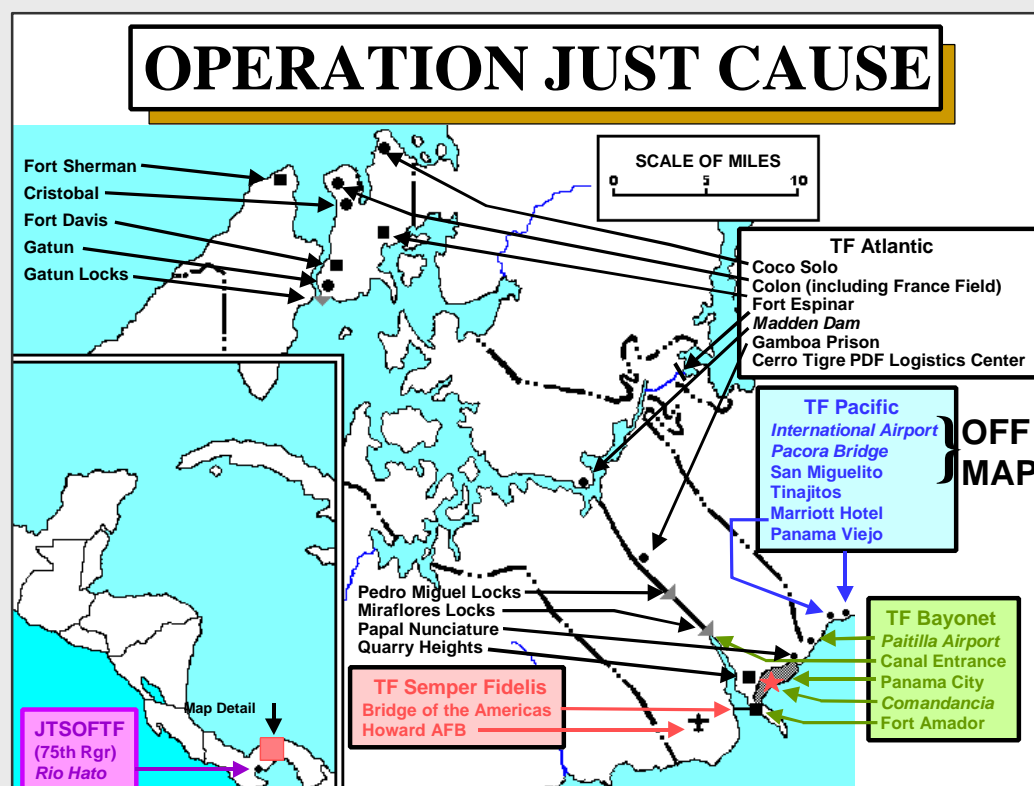
#### HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

**2-40.** Retroactively, **OPERATION JUST CAUSE**, the December 1989 invasion of Panama, can be described in terms of Land Force Dominance. Operating with multiple, simultaneous decisive operations in a noncontiguous environment, the ground components of Joint Task Force – South caused the enemy's rapid and total collapse.

## OPERATION JUST CAUSE

On 17 December 1989, President Bush approved the attack of Panama with a force of 26,000. The goal was to eliminate the Panama Defense Forces (PDF) and remove their leader, Manuel Antonio Noreiga. General Maxwell R. Thurman's summation several months later of the first few days of Operation Just Cause could be used as a working definition of *Land Force Dominance*.

*"At 12:45 A.M. on 20 December 1989, U.S. forces began the assault. The introduction of overwhelming combat power on a host of targets simultaneously during the hours of darkness characterized the assault. The goal was to minimize casualties on both sides and to incapacitate the Panama Defense Forces and its leadership as quickly as possible. Noreiga surrendered to U.S. forces at 8:50 PM on 3 January 1990. Operation Just Cause was essentially over."*



The military planners earmarked 27 targets to be secured simultaneously. These targets were distributed throughout the Joint Task Force – South's ground components as follows:

- TF Atlantic (3<sup>rd</sup> Bde 7<sup>th</sup> Inf Div (L))** Scattered targets throughout northern and central Panama Canal Zone (many in vicinity of Colon): Coco Solo (PDF Marine base), Fort Espinar, France Field (main Colon airstrip), Madden Dam, Cerro Tigre logistics center, Gamboa, Renacer Prison
- TF Pacific (1<sup>st</sup> Bde 82<sup>nd</sup> Abn Div)** Torrijos International Airport, Tocumen Military Airfield, Tinajitas, Panama Viejo, Fort Cimarron
- TF Bayonet (193<sup>rd</sup> Inf Bde (L))** Entrance to canal, Commandancia, PDF Barracks, other PDF stations in Panama City, Fort Amador

**TF Semper Fi** Blocking mission at Bridge of the Americas, Howard AFB security

**Joint Special Operations TF (75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regt)** Assault on Torrijos/Tocumen and Rio Hato (HQ PDF 6<sup>th</sup> Inf Co)

**Navy SEALs** Assault by sea on Paitilla Airport (home of Noreiga's private jet), protect bridge of the Americas, disable fast patrol boats at Coco Solo and Noreiga's yacht in Balboa Harbor

**Delta Force (TF Green)** Carcel Modelo Prison; also would snatch Noreiga if he were located

**3/7 Special Forces (TF Black)** Seize TV tower at Cerro Azul, block Pacora River Bridge

The operation commenced just after midnight on 21 December 1989. JTF- South's relative combat power at the start of the operation was over nine to one in forces without taking into account JTF- South's superior training, leadership, and material, such as night-fighting capabilities. This overwhelming combat power coupled with superior situational awareness allowed GEN Thurman to conduct simultaneous decisive operations from noncontiguous locations. The vastly outnumbered PDF was overwhelmed and unable to respond in a coordinated manner to so many attacks in so many different places. Despite isolated pockets of resistance, Panama was essentially secured eight hours after the operation commenced.

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*"In war, obscurity and confusion are normal. Late, exaggerated or misleading information, surprise situations, and counterorders are to be expected."*

*Infantry in Battle, 1939*

## CHAPTER 3

# BASIC TACTICAL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The tactician must understand the basic tactical concepts and definitions used by the military profession. This chapter introduces the doctrinal hierarchy that forms the framework by which this manual is organized. The concepts and terms in this chapter are common to most operations. Those concepts and terms specific to a type or form of operations are discussed in the corresponding chapter. For example Chapter 4, The Basics of the Offense, discusses the objective as a control measure.

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### DOCTRINAL HIERARCHY

**3-2.** Figure 3-1 shows the doctrinal hierarchy and relationship between the types and subordinate forms of operations. While an operation's predominant characteristic labels it as an offensive, defensive, stability, or support action, different units involved in that operation may be conducting different types and subordinate forms of operations, and often transition rapidly from one type or subordinate form to another as the situation develops. A good tactician chooses the right combinations of maneuver to place the enemy at the maximum disadvantage. The commander rapidly shifts from one type or form of operation to another to continually keep the enemy off balance while positioning his forces for maximum effectiveness. Flexibility in transitioning contributes to a successful operation.

**3-3. The commander conducts enabling operations to assist the planning, preparation, and execution of any of the four types of military actions (offense, defense, stability, and support). Enabling operations are never decisive operations. They are either shaping or sustainment operations.** Part IV of this manual discusses enabling operations that are not the subject of a separate field manual. The commander uses enabling operations to help him conduct military actions with minimal risk.

**3-4.** This hierarchy does not describe discrete, mutually exclusive operations. All tactical missions can contain elements of several different types and subordinate forms.

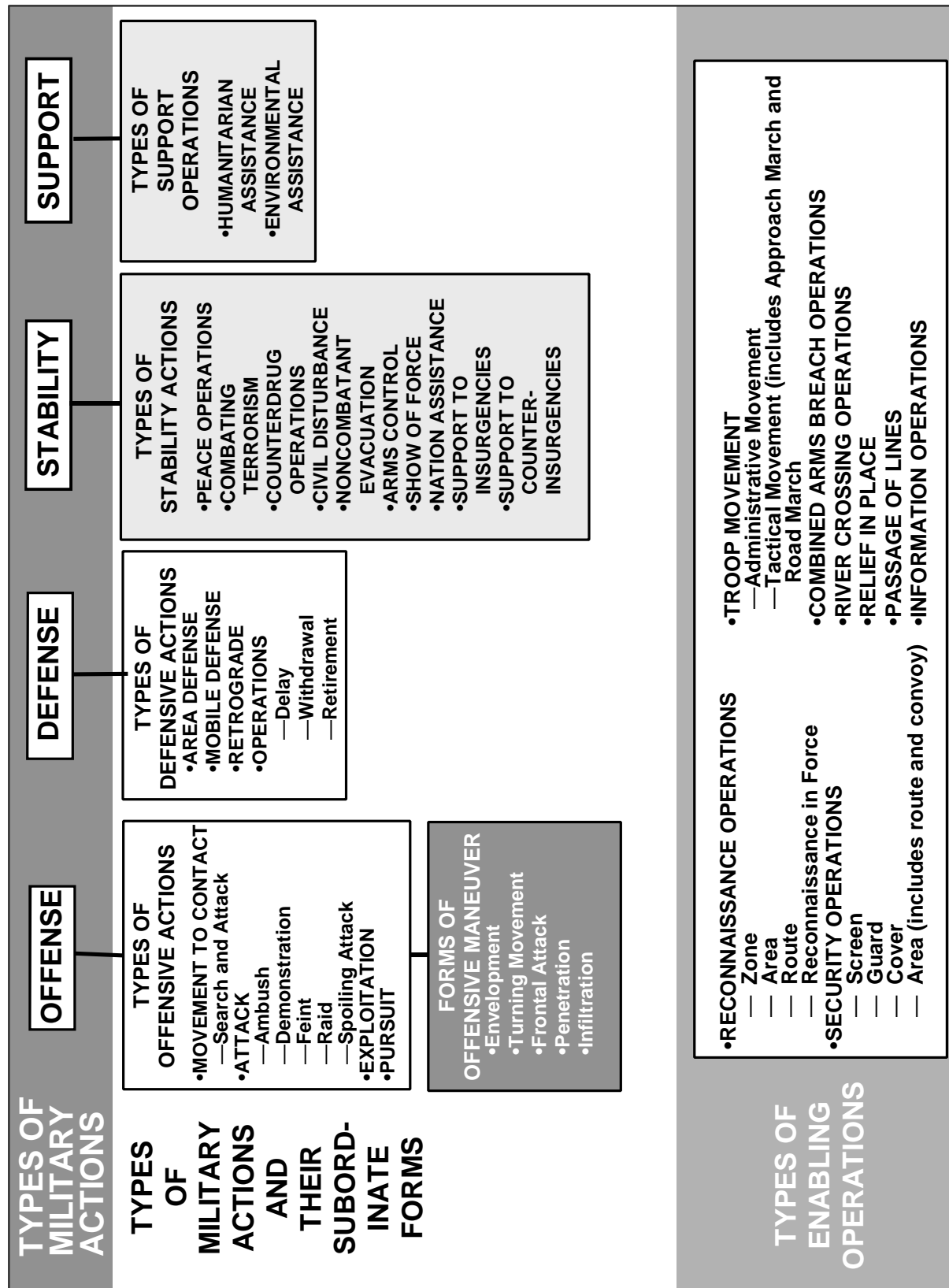


Figure 3-1. Doctrinal Hierarchy of Operations



For example, an attacking commander may have one subordinate conducting an envelopment, while another subordinate conducts a frontal attack to fix the enemy. The enveloping force usually attacks once it gains a positional advantage over the enemy. In pursuit, the direct-pressure force conducts a movement to contact while repeatedly attacking to keep pressure on the fleeing enemy. The encircling force uses an envelopment, usually moving in a movement-to-contact formation, to conduct a series of attacks to destroy or clear enemy forces in its path on the way to its blocking position. Once it occupies the blocking position, the unit may transition to a defense as it blocks the retreat of the fleeing enemy force.

## THE FACTORS OF METT-TC

**3-5.** The six factors of METT-TC — mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops, time available, and civil considerations — describe the unique situation in which a tactician executes the science and art of tactics. An analysis of the factors of METT-TC is critical during the military decision making process (MDMP). The METT-TC analytical framework is useful in assessing the planning, preparation, and execution of operations. The tactician considers these six factors for any type of operation. Their impact on an operation will differ, but each must be considered. That consideration involves both the science and art of tactics. Terrain and weather effects on movement rates and fuel consumption are quantifiable and, therefore, part of the science of war. For example, cargo helicopters can lift less weight in hot climates at high altitudes.

## MISSION

**3-6.** The first consideration in planning a tactical operation is always the assigned mission. The mission statement defines the *who, what, when, where, and why* of the operation. A thorough understanding of the mission provides the focus for the planning process. The commander analyzes his mission in terms of the higher commander's intent, mission, and concept of operation. (See FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, for a detailed discussion of mission analysis.)

**3-7.** When assigning missions to subordinates, the commander ensures all subordinate missions support his decisive operation(s) and his higher commander's intent. Missions to subordinate commanders should always allow the greatest possible freedom of action, constrained only by those measures that ensure coordination of the necessary effects. Ideally, the commander assigns subordinates a mission and an area of operations without further restrictions. Some types of operations require greater control and coordination, such as a combined arms breaching operation.

**3-8.** The commander considers possible subsequent missions, focusing his planning resources on the most probable when analyzing his mission. He plans to exploit success and aggressively looks for these opportunities, keeping within his commander's intent.

## ENEMY

**3-9.** The second factor to consider in tactical operations is the enemy — his dispositions (to include organization, strength, location, and battlefield mobility), doctrine, equipment, capabilities, and probable course of action. The commander must remember that the enemy is an intelligent, clever, calculating opponent who will do anything he can to upset friendly plans. He will try to preempt friendly operations, interfere with friendly command and control, and disrupt friendly combined arms synchronization. Once the commander launches an operation, the enemy will attempt to determine friendly courses of action and react to defeat them. Every friendly move will be met with an enemy reaction. When the enemy has the initiative, all friendly reactions to enemy actions will result in an enemy counteraction. As a result, the friendly commander can never assume that his operation will unfold as planned. The enemy always has opportunities to unhinge the operation. The commander must analyze his command for weaknesses and vulnerabilities that the enemy will seek to exploit and then act to counter them. The manuals in the FM 100-60 series document the tactics and operational art associated with potential heavy and light, and special operations enemy organizations. Field Manual 34-130, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*, outlines techniques for a commander to use to determine enemy courses of action.

## TERRAIN AND WEATHER

**3-10.** Terrain and weather are natural conditions that man has only a limited ability to influence, although terrain includes manmade infrastructure, such as roads and cities. The commander analyzes terrain and weather for favorable and unfavorable conditions. The enemy commander analyzes the same conditions.

### Terrain

**3-11.** The terrain has a direct impact on the selection of objectives; location, movement, and control of forces; effectiveness of weapons and other systems; and protective measures. Effective use of terrain diminishes the effects of enemy fires, increases the effects of friendly fire, and facilitates surprise. The effects of terrain on operations vary depending on whether a force is on the defense or the offense. For example, cross-compartmented terrain favors the defender and hinders the attacker.

**3-12.** An appreciation of terrain — the ability to analyze its impact on operations — is one of the most important skills a commander can possess. Whenever possible, the commander conducts a personal reconnaissance of the terrain where he plans to operate. Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) is critical to analyzing and understanding the effect of terrain on friendly and enemy courses of action. Terrain is normally analyzed using the acronym OCOKA, the five military aspects of terrain:

- Observation and fields of fire.
- Cover and concealment.
- Obstacles.
- Key and decisive terrain.
- Avenues of approach.

**3-13.** The commander considers all aspects when analyzing terrain, focusing on the ones most relevant to the specific situation. Engineer topographic teams provide terrain analysis products to help the commander visualize the impact of terrain on his plan.

**3-14.** *Observation and Fields of Fire.* **Observation is the condition of weather and terrain that permits a force to see the friendly, enemy, and neutral personnel and systems, and key aspects of the environment.** The commander evaluates his observation capabilities for electronic and optical line-of-sight surveillance systems, as well as unaided visual observation. The highest terrain normally provides the best observation. For this reason, elevated terrain often draws enemy attention. **A field of fire is the area that a weapon or group of weapons may cover effectively from a given position.** A unit's ability to observe directly relates to its field of fire.

**3-15.** The commander's analysis of observation and fields of fire must consider many factors. Among these factors are the location and effect of dead space, that area within the range of a weapon system, radar, or observer that cannot be covered by fire or observation from a particular position because of intervening obstacles, the nature of the ground, trajectory characteristics, or limitations in the system's traversing, elevation and depression capabilities. The commander is able to identify potential enemy and friendly engagement areas through his evaluation of observation and fields of fire.

**3-16.** *Cover and Concealment.* **Cover is protection from the effects of fires. Concealment is protection from observation and surveillance.** The commander considers cover and concealment from friendly and enemy perspectives to identify potential friendly and enemy assembly areas, routes and axes used to move

forces, locations of assault positions, ambush locations, and battle positions. Terrain that offers cover and concealment limits fields of fire.

**3-17. Obstacles.** **Obstacles are any physical characteristics of the terrain that impede the mobility of a force.** Obstacles can exist naturally, be man-made, or be a combination. Obstacles fall into two categories: existing or reinforcing. The types of existing obstacles are natural, manmade, and military. The types of reinforcing obstacles are tactical and protective. A reinforcing obstacle's effectiveness varies with the type of force negotiating it, the fires covering it, the nature of the obstacle, and the weather.

**3-18. Key Terrain and Decisive Terrain.** **Key terrain is any locality or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant in a given course of action.** Terrain adjacent to the commander's area of operation may be key if its control is necessary to accomplish the mission. **Decisive terrain, when present, is key terrain whose seizure and retention is mandatory for successful mission accomplishment.** It should be stressed that decisive terrain is relatively rare and is not necessarily a characteristic of every situation. If the commander identifies decisive terrain, he specifies it in his concept for the operation to communicate its importance. Decisive terrain normally is not dependent upon the course of action selected, while key terrain is course of action dependent.

**3-19. Avenues of Approach.** **An avenue of approach is the air or ground route leading to an objective (or key terrain in its path) that an attacking force can use.** The size and type of force that can use it characterizes an avenue of approach. (For example, a dismounted infantry company avenue of approach, an armored division avenue of approach, or an attack helicopter company avenue of approach.) A good avenue of approach allows ease of movement and contributes to the protection of the force by providing adequate maneuver space, good cover, concealment, observation, fields of fire, and avoids obstacles. Avenues of approach normally incorporate key terrain or deny its use to the enemy.

**3-20.** Corridors (ridge and valley systems) can either form natural avenues of approach, if they run towards an objective, or obstacles to movement if they run perpendicular to the direction of movement, forming cross compartments. Troops using valleys as avenues of approach must control the adjacent ridges to protect their movement. Close or broken terrain, heavy woods, built-up areas, and abrupt changes in elevation hinder heavy forces but provide cover and concealment for light forces. Al-

though open, rolling terrain provides little concealment and cover to light forces, it is suited for rapid advances by heavy formations.

### **Weather**

**3-21.** Weather and its effects on terrain impact all aspects of tactical operations. Weather affects the condition and capabilities of soldiers and weapon systems to include trafficability, visibility, obstacle emplacement times, and munitions performance. Weather can create opportunities as well as difficulties for each side. For example, bad weather can provide concealment for a moving force while making construction of fighting positions more difficult for the defender. Simultaneously, bad weather helps the defender by making offensive movement more difficult. The commander must look for ways to use weather to his advantage.

### **TROOPS**

**3-22.** The fourth factor considered in tactical operations is the number, type, and condition of available friendly troops. The commander wants to use the full capabilities of available troops — task organized as an effective combined arms team, reinforcing the strengths and compensating for the weaknesses of the available forces. (For a discussion of each arm and service, tactical echelons, and task organization see Appendix A.) Differences in mobility, protection, firepower, equipment, morale, experience, leadership, and training make some units more suitable for certain missions than others, affecting how the commander employs them. Even the personalities of subordinate commanders are important. A bold commander may be a better choice for a pursuit mission, while a methodical commander may be a good choice to command a unit breaching an extensive obstacle.

**3-23.** The commander considers his troops when analyzing whether he has enough forces to accomplish his mission. If he determines that he does not, he requests additional resources from his higher commander. Increasing assets in one area may compensate for a shortage of assets in another area. For example, providing an additional artillery battalion to support a force may compensate for its lack of infantry soldiers. The commander must ensure that when he assigns a mission to a subordinate, he provides him with the right mix of troops to accomplish the mission.

### **TIME AVAILABLE**

**3-24.** Time is considered primarily in terms of time available to plan, prepare, and execute operations. The commander and his staff must be aware of the amount of time and space it takes their units to assemble, deploy, move, converge, and mass combat

power effectively. They must consider time with respect to the enemy. The time available is always related to the enemy's ability to execute his own plan, prepare, and execute cycle. (See the discussion of choice, tradeoff, and risk found in Chapter 1). The time required to plan, prepare, and execute an operation varies with the size of the unit. Smaller units require less time than larger units.

**3-25.** Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, discusses time as a factor in planning. Commanders at all levels must always be aware of their subordinates' time requirements. The parallel planning process described in the above-mentioned chapter is a good place to start. A commander can save additional time by taking advantage of standing operating procedures (SOPs), preplanned actions, and habitual relationships. The existence of SOPs promote understanding and teamwork between commander, staff, and subordinates. Commanders can rehearse and refine the execution of preplanned actions. Such actions include battle drills and procedures, such as refuel on the move (ROM) site operations. Habitual relationships in task organization and standard supporting plans, such as sustainment area security plans, also save time.

## CIVIL CONSIDERATIONS

**3-26. Civil considerations are how the attitudes and activities of the civilian leaders, populations, and organizations within an area of operations will influence the conduct of military operations.** Because of the world's increasing urbanization, civil considerations are a factor in almost every operation. The presence of civilians, cultural monuments, and the civilian infrastructure influence rules of engagement and the conduct of operations.

**3-27.** The attitudes and activities of governments and their civilian populations must accommodate technological innovation, external social influences, and the sudden impact of natural and manmade disasters, such as hurricanes, environmental damage, and war. These changes cause stress in the civilian population and its leaders. The civilian population may or may not successfully incorporate these changes within its existing cultural value system. Addressing the problems posed by change requires considerable time and resources. The impatience of key leaders and groups, legal restrictions, and limits on resources can make it difficult for a commander to respond to these problems.

**3-28.** The presence of an independent press guarantees that US military activities that do not meet American military's standards for dealing with noncombatants will be reported in American, host nation, and international public forums. Commanders must

consider the effects of their actions on public opinion. The legitimacy of the activities of a force — or individual members of the force — can have far-reaching effects on the legitimacy of the types of military actions — offense, defensive, stability, or support. The commander must ensure that his soldiers understand that a tactically successful operation can also be operationally or strategically counterproductive because of the way in which they execute it and how the people perceive its execution.

**3-29.** Refugees resulting from our military actions and the commander's legal obligation to provide humanitarian assistance to them influences the commander's choice of a course of action and the execution of operations. The commander's moral responsibility to protect noncombatants also influences the planning, preparation, and execution of operations.

**3-30.** Corps and divisions will routinely interact with other US agencies, host nation governmental agencies, private voluntary organization, and nongovernmental organizations. In some circumstances, brigades and battalions also have to interact with these organizations. These groups do not necessarily have similar objectives or situational understanding. In almost every case they will not have the same degree of resources that a commander has available to him although they may provide specialized capabilities. The commander has a responsibility to influence this larger community to action by persuasion in circumstances in which he lacks the authority to command. In dealing with other governmental agencies and international organizations, the commander is only one among several. He must be able to produce constructive results by the force of his argument and the example established by his actions.

## BATTLEFIELD OPERATING SYSTEMS

**3-31.** The Army has six battlefield operating systems (BOS). (See Figure 3-2.) The BOS are the major functions performed by tactical units and are fully described in the Army Universal Task List. They should not be viewed independently of one another but as inseparable parts of a whole. The battlefield operating systems are tools the commander uses to syn-



**Figure 3-2. Battlefield Operating Systems**

chronize the effects of his combat power toward mission accomplishment during operations. They have no utility except in relationship to one another and the objective. Mission accomplishment and unit performance is what counts.

## DEPLOY/CONDUCT MANEUVER

**3-32. *Deploy/Conduct Maneuver* is the movement of combat forces to achieve a position of advantage with respect to enemy forces. This battlefield operating system includes the employment of forces on the battlefield in combination with fire (direct or indirect) or fire potential. Indirect fires are included under the employ firepower BOS. It also includes the conduct of tactical movement of all types of units, reconnaissance, mobility operations, and countermobility operations.**

**3-33. *Maneuver* is the movement of combat forces to gain positional advantage, usually in order to deliver — or threaten delivery of — direct and indirect fires.** Maneuver is the dynamic element of combat, the means of concentrating force effects on an objective to achieve the surprise, psychological shock, physical momentum, massed effects, and moral dominance that enables one force to defeat another. Maneuver and firepower are inseparable and complementary dynamics of combat. Although one force might dominate a phase of battle, the synchronized effects of both characterize all operations. Tempo and speed are keys to successful maneuver. Normally, heavy, light, Special Forces, and ranger units conduct maneuver.

**3-34.** A commander uses fire and movement in various combinations to accomplish his mission. (The integration of maneuver with firepower is a component of the Command and Control BOS.) Fire compels the enemy to disperse, seek cover, or face destruction. Movement compels the enemy to concentrate and engage. By using the art of tactics, the commander seeks to ensure that either enemy reaction puts the enemy at a disadvantage. As the enemy moves to concentrate, friendly fires engage enemy units. As the enemy attempts to avoid the effects of fires, friendly forces move to secure positions to place even more devastating fires and to physically annihilate the enemy force.

**3-54.** Noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) involves the use of available military and host nation resources to evacuate US dependents, government civilian employees, and private citizens (US and third nation) from an area of operations. Combat search and rescue is the location and extraction of distressed personnel and sensitive equipment from enemy controlled areas to prevent their capture. Various organizations can conduct these actions.



## DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE

**3-35. *Develop Intelligence*** is the collection of tasks that generate knowledge of the enemy, weather, and geographical features required by a commander in planning and conducting operations. It is derived from an analysis of information on the enemy's capabilities, intentions, vulnerabilities, and the environment. This includes the development of tactical intelligence requirements, the planning of collection activities, the collection of relevant information, the processing of that information to include the development of targeting information, and the preparation and dissemination of intelligence reports.

**3-36.** Developing intelligence is more than acquiring data. It is the analysis of data into intelligence products that allow a commander to understand how the enemy's capabilities, intentions, vulnerabilities; neutrals; terrain; and the weather impact his mission. A commander must be able to visualize all aspects of the area of operations to effectively and efficiently mass the effects of his combat power. These aspects include the factors of METT-TC pertinent to the commander's area of operations. The degree to which a commander can obtain situational understanding within his area of operations largely determines how well he can synchronize his reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition assets (RISTA).

**3-37.** The development of intelligence requires a flexible and tailorable architecture of procedures, organizations, and equipment to respond to the needs of commanders at all echelons during the planning, preparation, and execution cycle. It involves a mix of collection systems and intelligence analysis assets at each echelon from battalion through corps. Rarely will a single intelligence discipline or function produce a comprehensive picture of the enemy. Each of the intelligence disciplines and functions complement and cue each other. Each discipline or function produces bits and pieces of information that analysts synthesize to achieve situational understanding of the enemy, neutrals, terrain, and weather. Information gained by one means should be confirmed by another means as the situation permits.

**3-38.** The commander's RISTA assets support the information requirements of all echelons through the vertical and horizontal exchange of data since no one echelon has the organic capabilities it needs to fully meet its information requirements. The employment of reconnaissance assets results in the provision of combat information and other data that generate intelligence information.

**3-39.** There is a distinction between intelligence and combat information in how data is handled and used. If data must be processed and analyzed before the commander can use it, that data is intelligence and not combat information. ***Combat information is raw data gathered by or provided directly to the commander that, due to its highly perishable nature, he uses to direct the maneuver of his subordinates as received, with minimal staff interpretation or integration with other data.***

#### EMPLOY FIREPOWER

**3-40.** ***Employ Firepower*** is the collective and coordinated use of target-acquisition data, indirect-fire weapons, fixed-wing aircraft, electronic warfare, and other lethal and nonlethal means against targets located throughout an area of operations. The essential features of the employ firepower BOS are acquiring and processing tactical targets, employing fire support, and suppressing enemy air defenses. Firepower is most effective when combined with maneuver. The acquisition and attack of missile launch platforms and their supporting structures and systems are covered under the Protect the Force BOS.

**3-41.** This battlefield operating system provides the commander a wide variety of lethal options — such as mortars, field artillery, air support, and naval surface fires — to engage the enemy and support his chosen course of action. The commander considers the collateral damage resulting from attacking targets that might contain NBC stocks or hazardous materials. Employing firepower is most effective when combined with maneuver. In the offense, the commander coordinates the delivery of devastating effects to shatter the coherence of the enemy's defenses. In the defense, the commander employs firepower in combination with the other elements of combat power to wrest the initiative from an attacking enemy, denying him his objectives.

**3-42.** The fire support element at each maneuver headquarters incorporates air and naval surface fire support into the commander's scheme of maneuver. Air support is the combat power provided in support of ground forces by air component assets. From the perspective of fires, air support may come in the form of close air support or air interdiction. Air support can strike an enemy regardless of his geographical location within a commander's AO. Naval surface fire support is the combat power provided in support of ground force by maritime component surface assets. These surface assets can provide naval gunfire, rockets, and missiles to augment ground and air-delivered fires. When

available, naval gunfire systems can deliver large quantities of munitions in short periods of time.

**3-43.** Offensive information operations is the integrated use of assigned and supporting capabilities and activities, mutually supported by intelligence, to affect adversary decision makers or to influence other audiences to achieve or promote specific objectives. The capabilities include, but are not limited to, operations security, military deception, psychological operations, electronic warfare, physical destruction, special information operations, and computer network attack. Related activities include public affairs, civil affairs, and intelligence.

#### **PERFORM LOGISTICS AND COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT**

**3-44.** The *Perform Logistics and Combat Service Support* battlefield operating system is the support and assistance provided to sustain forces in an area of operations by arming, fueling, fixing equipment, moving, supplying, manning, and providing personal and health services. Combat service support is the provision of supply, transportation, maintenance, combat health support, personnel support, and field and other services required to sustain an operating force in an area of operation that may be joint, multinational, interagency, or a combination of these forces. Combat service support may be required to support contractors, civilians (such as refugees and disaster victims), or members of other governmental and nongovernmental agencies. It includes civil-military operations. Army, host nation, third nation, and contracted agencies may provide CSS to a unit individually or in combination.

**3-45.** Supply includes the stockpiling, management, and issuing of all types of supply to include fuel, ammunition, and repair parts in response to the force's needs. Transportation includes the planning and distribution of personnel, equipment, and supplies in the performance of CSS. It also involves assisting in the execution of tactical movements associated with the Deploy/Conduct Maneuver BOS. Maintenance preserves the availability of weapon systems and equipment.

**3-46.** Combat health support includes patient evacuation, medical regulating, hospitalization, health service logistics, blood management, dental services, preventative medicine, veterinary services, combat stress control, area medical support, medical laboratory services, and medical information management.

**3-47.** Personnel support involves those activities associated with manning the force. Personnel support encompasses personnel readiness management, replacement management, casualty operation management, and personnel accounting and strength reporting. Personnel service support functions include : personnel services, resource management, finance services, chaplain activities, public affairs, and legal service support. Personnel services includes personnel information management; postal operations management; morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR); American Red Cross; family support; the exchange system; and other essential personnel services, such as promotions, awards, and band.

**3-48.** Field services include laundry, shower, clothing and textile repairs, bakery, mortuary affairs, preparation of supplies and equipment for aerial delivery, water purification, and food preparation. Other services include general engineering, law and order operations, and protection from natural occurrences. General engineering includes vertical construction, real estate procurement, power generation, and fire fighting. Law and order operations involves the performance of law enforcement activities, criminal investigations, customs inspections, and internment operations. Protection from natural occurrences include preventative measures, such as inoculations and site selection to avoid potential floods, and reactive measures, such as sandbagging buildings to protect them from floods.

**3-49.** Common situational understanding and total asset visibility enable logisticians to make informed decisions, allowing Army elements to execute proactive vice reactive logistics. The integration of CSS automation systems within the Army Battle Command System (ABCS) facilitates the flow of logistical requirements and the synchronization of support activities. It also enhances throughput and increases the velocity of logistics support. The modular structure of CSS elements means logistical packages can rapidly be formed based on the factors of METT-TC. The addition of battlefield distribution, palletized load system, and improved cargo-handling technologies significantly alters the speed at which sustainment organizations can execute service support. However, the result of these logistics concepts reduces the level of supplies maintained at most tactical echelons. Noncontiguous operations may increase the difficulty in securing lines of communications.

## **EXERCISE COMMAND AND CONTROL**

**3-50.** The *Exercise Command and Control* battlefield operating system is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated com-

**mander over assigned and available forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control tasks are performed through an arrangement of personnel, information management, equipment and facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, preparing for, executing, and assessing the conduct of operations to accomplish the mission.**

It includes the acquisition and management of information, the maintenance of situational understanding, the conduct of situational estimates to determine actions to include risk management, and the direction and leading of subordinate forces.

**3-51.** The US Army's preferred philosophy of command and control is mission command, which is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Successful mission command results from subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to accomplish assigned or perceived missions. It requires an environment of trust and mutual understanding. (For a further discussion of mission command, see FM 100-34, *Command and Control*.)

**3-52.** Command and control occurs through the arrangement of personnel, equipment and facilities, and procedures employed by a commander as he plans, prepares, and executes operations with forces to accomplish his mission, assesses the operation's progress or lack of progress, and reacts to opportunities and setbacks. Command and control is a continuous process.

**3-53.** Friendly and enemy commanders actively try to impose their will on the other by presenting new and different problems to their opponent. The commander must use his command and control system to act or react faster than his enemy. Achieving a superior operational tempo allows him to either seize or retain, and then exploit, the initiative. Superior situational understanding leads to faster reaction. (For a further discussion of situational understanding, see FM 100-6, *Information Operations*.) Effectiveness and timeliness of decision and action in relation to the enemy are the most important goal of command and control. Each echelon's command and control process depends upon the next higher echelon's command and control process, and that of lower echelons.

**3-54.** Based on the factors of METT-TC, the commander determines to what degree he will accept risk. Managing risk requires educated judgment and professional competence on the part of commanders and leaders at all echelons and is inherent in the military decision making process. Proficiency in applying risk management is critical to conserving combat power and resources. The probability and severity of potential losses

from enemy action, accidents, and fratricide characterize risk. Risk decisions are the commander's business. The commander's confidence in the products of the IPB process and the forces and systems available to conduct security operations are key factors impacting his decision. The commander also examines the enemy's capabilities to conduct operations directed against the friendly sustaining base and employ weapons of mass destruction as part of this risk assessment. See FM 100-14, *Risk Management*.

## PROTECT THE FORCE

**3-55. The *Protect the Force* battlefield operating system is the protection of the tactical force's fighting potential so it can be applied at the appropriate time and place. It includes those measures the force takes to remain viable and functional by protecting itself from the effects of enemy activities.** Protect the force and force protection are synonymous terms. Those active and passive measures encompass the following:

- Conduct of air and missile defense.
- Protect against enemy hazards within the area of operations (including reducing or avoiding the effects of enemy and friendly weapons on personnel, units, and equipment, including the construction of fighting and survivability positions, and nuclear, chemical, and biological [NBC] and radiological defense).
- Conduct of defensive information operations (including operations security and deception).
- Conduct of local security operations (including counterreconnaissance, counterintelligence, and antiterrorism).
- Conduct of counterterrorism operations.

**3-56.** Counterair and tactical ballistic missile defense (TBMD) operations are separate, but highly related, activities. Counterair targets are manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), while TBMD targets are ballistic, cruise, and tactical air-to-surface missiles. Counterair and TBMD operations overlap in such areas as sensors, weapons, and communications. The nature of aircraft flight parameters provides a greater opportunity for engagement by friendly forces compared to TBMD flight engagement opportunities. Field Manual 44-100, *Air Defense Operations*, addresses counterair operations. Field Manual, 100-12, *Army Theater Ballistic Missile Defense*, addresses TBMD.

**3-57.** Survivability provides concealment and protective shelter from the effects of enemy weapons. Engineers construct survivability and fighting positions beyond combat units' organic capabilities. They also harden facilities for combat support and combat

service support units to resist destruction by the enemy. FM 5-103, *Survivability*, provides information on the construction of survivability and fighting positions.

**3-58.** NBC/Radiological defense rests on the principles of avoid, protect, and decontaminate. The use of NBC reconnaissance assets, surveillance systems, and tracking individual unit reports provides a common operational picture of battlefield contamination, which the commander should use to select or modify courses of action to avoid troops having to wear mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear. Troops should operate in MOPP only when the gains outweigh the burden. Units must plan for mission accomplishment while in individual and collective protection. The initiative for creating a contaminated battlefield lies completely at the discretion of an enemy. Engineer units provide additional equipment support necessary to establish NBC decontamination points and assist in route and area decontamination. Field Manual 3-4, *NBC Protection*, addresses this aspect of protect the force.

**3-59.** Defensive information operations (IO) are the integration and coordination of policies and procedures, operations, personnel, and technology to protect friendly information and information systems. Defensive IO are conducted through information assurance, information security, physical security, operations security, counterdeception, counterpropaganda, counterintelligence, psychological operations, electronic warfare, and special information operations mutually supported by public affairs, command information, offensive IO and intelligence. Defensive information operations ensure timely, accurate, and relevant information access while denying adversaries the opportunity to exploit friendly information and information systems for their own purposes. Field Manual 100-6, *Information Operations*, addresses this aspect of protect the force.

**3-60.** The commander establishes and maintains local security for his unit to include the conduct of counterintelligence and antiterrorism operations. Chapter 13 discusses the conduct of security operations included in the deploy/conduct maneuver BOS.

**3-61.** Counterterrorism activities are offensive measures taken by civilian and military agencies of a government to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. Army involvement in counterterrorism is limited by host nation responsibilities, Department of Justice and Department of State lead agency authority, legal and political restrictions, and appropriate DOD directives. When directed by the national command authorities or the appropriate unified commander, designated Army special operating forces have the primary mission of applying their specialized capabilities to preclude, preempt, and resolve terrorist incidents abroad.

## BASIC TACTICAL CONCEPTS

**3-62.** The following paragraphs contain basic tactical concepts listed in alphabetical order common to offensive and defensive actions and enabling operations. (See Figure 3-3.) Basic tactical concepts that relate primarily to only one type of military action or type of operation are addressed in the corresponding chapters of this manual. In some cases the discussion of a concept in FM 100-5 has been expanded based upon difference between the operational and tactical levels of war.

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### AREA OF INFLUENCE

**3-63. The commander's area of influence is the entire physical volume**

**where his systems can influence the success of his operations.** It may be irregular in shape and overlap another unit's area of influence. It is not a control measure assigned by a higher headquarters. It is typically defined by the range of direct-fire weapon systems, the combat range of attack helicopters, and the observed range of indirect fire systems and electronic warfare means. As a commander develops his plan in accordance with the military decision making process, he considers each of his subordinates' area of influence when assigning areas of operation and missions. For a discussion of what a commander considers when deciding the size of a subordinate's area of operation see page 3-23. The actual area of influence expands or contracts in size with changes in the factors of METT-TC, such as movement within the area of operations, changes in task organization, or changes in the rules of engagement.

**Figure 3-3. Basic Tactical Concepts**

### AREA OF INTEREST

**3-64. The commander's area of interest encompasses all friendly, enemy, and neutral actions, regardless of their geographical location, that can influence the commander's operations in the near term.** It is not a control measure assigned by a higher headquarters. The commander's area of interest usually extends beyond his area of influence. The commander's area of interest usually includes



at least the geographic locations immediately adjacent to the location of his own force. It usually exceeds the reach of his organic sensors. (See Figure 3-4.)

#### CLOSE COMBAT

**3-65. Close combat encompasses all actions that place friendly forces in immediate contact with the enemy where the commander uses direct fire and movement in combination to defeat or destroy enemy forces and/or seize and retain ground.** Forces conducting close combat are part of a combined arms team and may be supported by indirect fires. Close combat occurs throughout an AO whenever and wherever the commander needs to engage an enemy force with direct-fire weapon systems. Close combat is also necessary when the commander is unable to keep enemy forces from closing with friendly forces or locations that must be protected. This occurs when an enemy ambushes a friendly force or attacks a sustainment base.

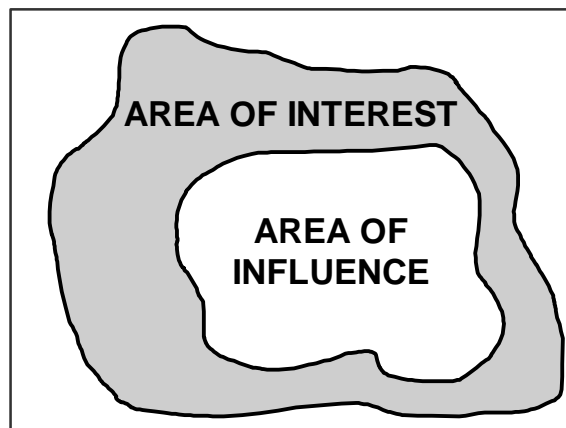


Figure 3-4. Area of Interest Compared to Area of Influence

#### COMBAT POWER

**3-66. Combat power is the total means of destructive or disruptive force that a military unit can apply against an opponent at a given time. It is a combination of the effects of maneuver, firepower, protection, sustainment, and leadership in relation to a given opponent.** The commander assesses his situational understanding; soldiers, to include their discipline, resolution, state of training, tactical skill, and inherent fighting ability; the capabilities of his weapon systems to include level of protection; leadership of subordinate commanders; and the availability of supplies and supporting services in determining his force's combat power. The ability to synchronize the six battlefield operating systems allows the commander to maximize his combat power. The commander determines his relative combat power when he compares his combat power with that of an enemy.

#### COMBINED ARMS

**3-67. Combined arms operations are the synchronized and simultaneous application of several arms, such as infantry, armor, artillery, engineers,**

**air defense, and aviation to achieve greater effects on the enemy than that achieved if each arm were used against the enemy in sequence or against separate objectives.** Weapons and units are more effective when they operate in concert. Each branch of the army provides unique capabilities that complement the other branches. A combined arms team consists of two or more arms supporting one another. The use of combined arms provides complementary and reinforcing effects and may have asymmetrical effects on an enemy force. The proper combination of actions and systems by the combined arms team is the essence of combined arms. No single action, weapon, branch, or arm of service generates sufficient power to achieve the effects required to dominate an opponent. (For more information on symmetrical and asymmetrical effects, FM 100-5, *Operations*.)

**3-68.** Armor, attack helicopter, and infantry units are normally the nucleus of the combined arms team. However, emerging capabilities allow the commander to use any combat arms unit, such as artillery and aviation, to form that nucleus. The commander uses his combat arms forces in different combinations to provide flexibility in conducting different types of operations in varied terrain. For example, a commander may have his infantry lead in mountains and cities when moving dismounted, while his armor leads in open terrain. Attack helicopters can deliver large quantities of precision munitions throughout the area of operations. A commander can conduct decisive operations using field artillery multiple rocket launchers and cannons augmented by the effects of fixed-wing aviation given the correct conditions. Air defense artillery destroys enemy aerial assets to assist the free movement of the friendly force. Engineers enhance the friendly force's mobility, degrade the enemy's mobility, and assist in providing for survivability of the friendly force. Combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) members of the combined arms team support the combined arms nucleus by combining capabilities in an appropriate manner to support and sustain the combined arms force.

#### **CULMINATING POINT**

**3-69.** A culminating point is that point in time and space when a force no longer has the combat power to accomplish its mission. It applies to both offensive and defensive actions. An attacker reaches his culminating point when his effective combat power no longer exceeds that of the defender, his momentum no longer paralyzes the enemy, or both. Beyond this point, the attacker risks counterattack and defeat and continues the offense only at great peril. A defender reaches his culminating point when he can no longer effectively oppose the attacker. Beyond this point,

the defender risks the continued existence of his force and continues to defend only at great peril. FM 100-5, *Operations*, discusses the culminating point. Culminating points are closely tied to the conduct of transition operations. For a discussion of transition operations in the offense, see Chapter 4. For a discussion of transition operations in the defense, see Chapter 5.

#### DECISIVELY ENGAGED

**3-70. A unit is decisively engaged when it is fully committed to combat and cannot extricate itself from the existing situation. In the absence of outside assistance, the engagement is fought to a conclusion and either won or lost with the forces at hand.** A unit might become decisively engaged to hold key terrain, defeat a specific enemy force, secure a specific objective, or as a result of being placed in a position of disadvantage by an attacker.

#### DEFEAT IN DETAIL

**3-71. Defeat in detail is achieved by concentrating overwhelming combat power against separate parts of a force rather than defeating the entire force at once.** A smaller force can use this technique to achieve success against a larger enemy. Defeat in detail can occur sequentially (defeat of separate elements one at a time in succession), such as when a commander masses the overwhelming effects of its combat power against an enemy element outside the supporting distance of the rest of the enemy force. This allows the commander to destroy the targeted enemy element before it can be effectively reinforced.

#### DEFEAT MECHANISM

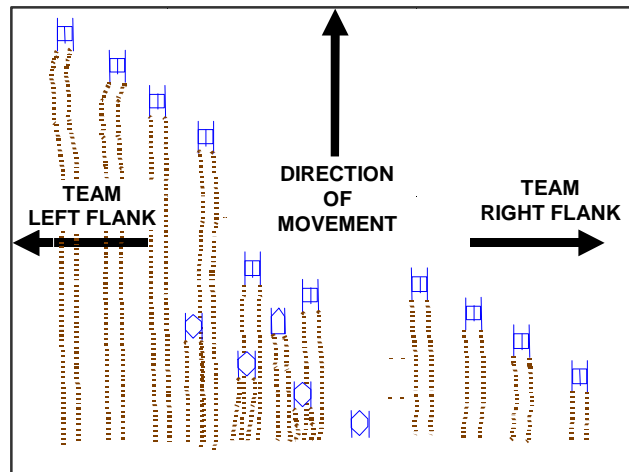
**3-72. The defeat mechanism is the singular action or pattern of activities by which a commander defeats his opponent. It is not a specific force or unit.** The specific defeat mechanism adopted by the commander depends on the factors of METT-TC. The presence of different defeat mechanisms, along with changes in task organization, signals the onset of different phases of an operation. For example, the defeat mechanism for an attack is to maneuver to isolate a portion of the enemy force, leading to its destruction or rendering it ineffective. In an area defense, the defeat mechanism's primary pattern is to absorb the enemy's momentum as he moves into an interlocked series of positions from where he will be destroyed largely by fires. A defeat mechanism may combine several types or forms of operations.

## FLANKS

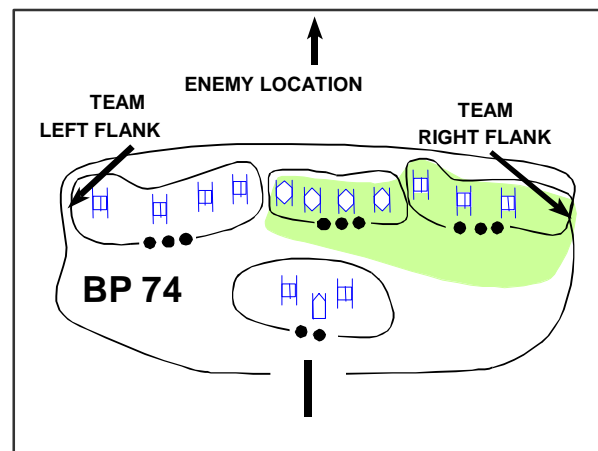
**3-73. Flanks are the right or left limits of a unit.** For a stationary unit they are designated in terms of an enemy's actual or expected location. (See Figure 3-5.) For a moving unit they are defined by the direction of movement. (See Figure 3-6.) A commander tries to deny the enemy the opportunity to engage his flanks because he can concentrate the least amount of direct fires on his flanks, while he seeks to engage his enemy's flanks for the same reason.

### Assailable Flanks

**3-74. An assailable flank is exposed to attack or envelopment.** It usually results from the terrain, the weakness of forces, or a gap between adjacent units. If one flank rests on highly restrictive terrain and the other flank is on open terrain, then the latter is immediately recognized as the assailable flank for a heavy ground force. The flank on the restrictive terrain may be assailable for a light force. Sufficient room must exist for the attacking force to maneuver for the flank to be assailable. A unit may not have an assailable flank if both flanks are tied into impassible terrain or another force. When a commander has an assailable flank, he may attempt to refuse it by using a variety of techniques, such as supplementary positions.



**Figure 3-5. Flanks of a Stationary Unit**



**Figure 3-6. Flanks of an Armor-Heavy Team Moving in an Echelon Right Formation**

## Flanking Position

**3-75. A flanking position is a geographical location on the flank of a force from which effective fires can be placed on that flank.** An attacking commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions against a defending force to place destructive fires directly against enemy vulnerabilities. A defending commander maneuvers to occupy flanking positions on the flanks of a hostile route of advance for the same reason. A flanking position that an advancing enemy can readily avoid has little value to the defender unless the enemy does not realize it is occupied.

## INTERIOR LINES

**3-76. A commander has interior lines if he can shift his forces' locations or reinforce faster than the enemy can shift location or reinforce. He can achieve interior lines through central position (its operations diverging from a central point), from superior lateral lines of communications,**

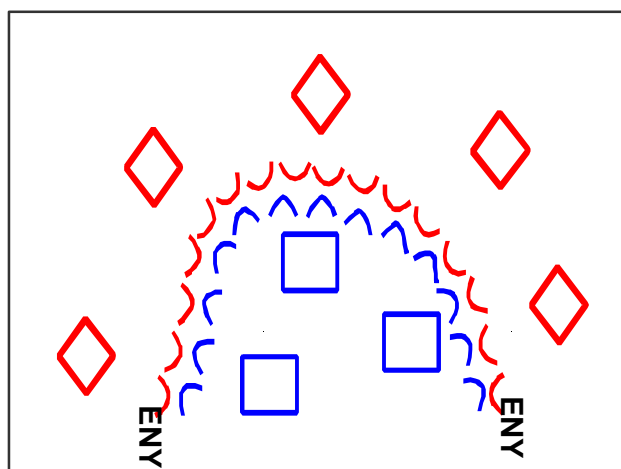


Figure 3-7. Example of Geographical Interior Lines

**or greater tactical mobility.** The force having interior lines benefits in two ways: first, its ability to shift effects more rapidly than the enemy ; secondly, its ability to reinforce its subordinate elements faster than the enemy. (See Figure 3-7.)

## LINES OF COMMUNICATION

**3-77. Lines of communication (LOC) are land, water, and air routes that connect an operating military force with its bases.** There are several different types of LOCs that support a unit. Supplies, personnel, equipment, and military forces move along these lines using any available transportation mode, such as highway, railway, pipeline, and inland waterway. A line of communication includes the ports, airfields, railyards, and storage facilities that terminate the distribution system. Lines of communication also include those means through which information moves, such as satellites, wide-area network nodes, and computer centers. For any given operation the force needs a combination of LOCs that provide all the support the force requires.

Maintaining adequate LOCs is a key factor in delaying a unit's arrival at its culminating point. Field Manuals 100-5, *Operations*, and 100-10, *Combat Service Support*, address LOC in more detail.

## MUTUAL SUPPORT

**3-78. Mutual support is support units render to each other against an enemy because of their assigned tasks, relative positions with respect to each other and the enemy, and inherent capabilities. Mutual support exists between two or more positions when they support each other by direct or indirect fire, thus preventing the enemy from attacking one position without being subjected to fire from one or more adjacent positions. That same relationship applies to units moving with relation to each other except they can maneuver to obtain positional advantage to achieve that support.** It is normally associated with fire and movement (maneuver) although it can also relate to the provision of CS and CSS.

**3-79.** In the defense, the commander selects tactical positions to achieve the maximum degree of mutual support. Mutual support increases the strength of defensive positions, prevents the enemy from attempting to defeat the attacking friendly forces in detail, and helps prevent infiltration. In the offense, the commander maneuvers his forces to ensure a similar degree of support between attacking elements.

## OPERATION

**3-80. An operation is a military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission.** It includes the process of planning, preparing, and executing offensive, defensive, stability, and support actions needed to gain the objectives of any engagement, battle, major action, or campaign. It also includes activities that enable the performance of any of the four types of military actions, such as security, reconnaissance, and troop movement.

## PIECEMEAL COMMITMENT

**3-81. Piecemeal commitment is the immediate employment of units in combat as they become available instead of waiting for larger aggregations of units to ensure mass, or the unsynchronized employment of available forces so that their combat power is not employed effectively.** Piecemeal commitment subjects the smaller committed forces to defeat in detail and prevents the massing and synchronization of combat power with following combat and CS elements. However, piecemeal commitment may be advantageous to maintain m o-

mentum and to retain or exploit the initiative. A commander may require piecemeal commitment of a unit to reinforce a faltering operation, especially if the commitment of small units provide all of the combat power needed to avert disaster. The pile-on technique associated with search and attack operations employs the piecemeal commitment of troops. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of search and attack operations.)

#### **SUPPORTING DISTANCE**

**3-82. Supporting distance is the distance two or more units may separate yet come to the aid of each other before they can be defeated separately.** Supporting distance is a factor of combat power, dispositions, communications capability, and tactical mobility of friendly and enemy forces.

#### **SUPPORTING RANGE**

**3-83. Supporting range is the distance one unit may be geographically separated from a second unit, yet remain within the maximum effective range of the second unit's weapon systems.** Major factors that affect supporting range are the range of the supporting unit's weapon systems and their locations in relation to the supported unit's positions.

#### **TACTICAL MOBILITY**

**3-84. Tactical mobility is the ability to move rapidly from one part of the battlefield to another, relative to the enemy.** Tactical mobility is a function of cross-country mobility, firepower, and protection. The terrain, soil conditions, and the weather affect cross-country mobility. Heavy ground maneuver units have good tactical mobility — except in restrictive terrain — combined with firepower and protection. They can move on the battlefield against most enemy forces unless faced with an enemy who can defeat their protection and cannot be suppressed by friendly fires. Light ground maneuver units have a tactical mobility advantage against enemy heavy forces in restrictive terrain, but limited firepower and protection. Army aviation maneuver units have good tactical mobility in most types of terrain, good firepower, but limited protection. Extreme weather conditions can restrict the tactical mobility of Army aviation units.

## BASIC TACTICAL GRAPHIC CONTROL MEASURES

**3-85.** The following section discusses control measures that apply to all operations in alphabetical order. See Figure 3-8. The appropriate chapters discuss those graphic control measures that apply to only one type or subordinate form of a military action. For example, Chapter 4 discusses the objective as a basic offensive control measure since an objective is a graphic control measure that applies only to offensive actions.

**3-86.** Units conducting tactical operations must have clearly defined tasks and responsibilities. The commander uses control measures to establish specific responsibilities to prevent units from

impeding one another and to impose necessary restrictions. Control measures can be permissive (which allows something to happen) or restrictive (which limits how something is done). Control measures may be graphical, such as boundaries, or procedural, such as target engagement priorities. A commander should establish only the minimum control measures necessary to provide essential coordination and deconfliction between units. Control measures must not unduly restrict subordinates in accomplishing their missions. The commander removes restrictive control measures as soon as possible. Field Manual 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Graphics*, discusses the rules for drawing control measures on overlays and maps.

**3-87.** Well-conceived control measures facilitate the conduct of current and future operations. As the tactical situation evolves the commander adjusts his control measures as necessary to maintain synchronization and ensure mission accomplishment. The commander balances the risk of introducing additional friction into the operation with the benefits gained by changing them if all of his subordinate elements do not receive the new control measures when contemplating changes to previous established control measures.

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**Figure 3-8. Basic Tactical Graphic Control Measures**



**3-88.** Control measures apply to all forces: combat, combat support, and combat service support. The commander ensures all higher-echelon control measures, such as phase lines and checkpoints, are incorporated into his graphic control measures. When he reports to higher headquarters, he only references the control measures established by that headquarters.

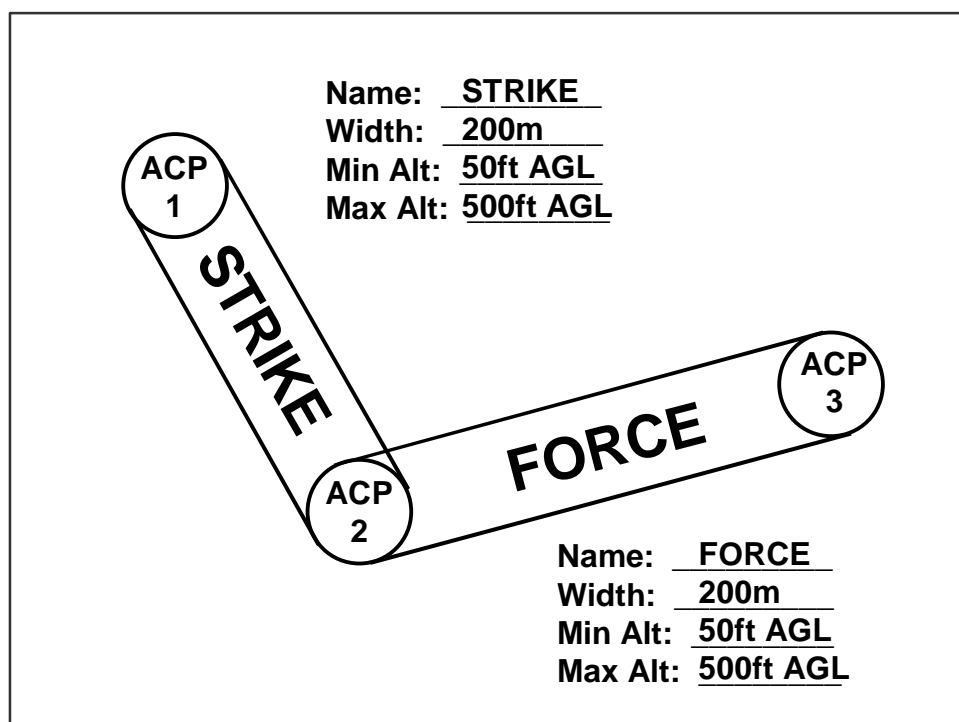


Figure 3-9. Generic Air Corridor

## AIR CORRIDOR

**3-89.** An air corridor is a restricted air route of travel specified for use by friendly aircraft and established to prevent friendly aircraft from being fired on by friendly forces. It is used to deconflict artillery-firing positions with aviation traffic, including unmanned aerial vehicles. An air corridor always includes air control points where the air corridor makes a definite change in direction. **An air control point is an easily identifiable point on the terrain or an electronic navigation aid used to provide necessary control during air movement.** Low-level transit routes (LLTR), minimum-risk routes (MRR), standard use army aircraft flight routes (SAAFR), and unmanned aerial vehicle routes are types of air corridors established for different reasons. Figure 3-9 depicts a generic air corridor. See FM 100-103, *Army Airspace Command and Control*, for more information on aerial control measures.

## AREA OF OPERATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

**3-90. An area of operations (AO) is the basic control measure for all types of operations.** The owning unit may not change control measures imposed by higher headquarters within their AO. However, it may establish additional control measures to coordinate and synchronize its operations. All units assigned an AO have the following responsibilities:

- Terrain Management.
- Movement Control.
- Fires.
- Security.

Selected echelons have an additional responsibility to provide airspace command and control.

**3-91.** The assignment of an AO to a subordinate headquarters maximizes decentralized execution by empowering subordinate commanders. This encourages the use of mission command. At the same time it adds the above responsibilities to the lower headquarters. Conversely, failure to designate subordinate AOs maximizes centralized execution and limits the subordinates' tactical options. The latter choice should be made only when absolutely mandated by the factors of METT-TC. For example, a brigade commander responsible for blocking an enemy advance along a single avenue of approach may opt to assign his subordinate battalions' battle positions to support a brigade engagement area instead of subdividing his AO and the avenue of approach into battalion AOs.

**3-92.** A higher headquarters designates an AO using boundaries. Boundaries establish responsibilities on the surface of the earth. The vertical dimension is controlled through the use of airspace control measures. (See page 3-29.) An AO is normally assigned to a maneuver unit, but it may also be assigned to CS or CSS units. Having an AO assigned both restricts and facilitates the movement of units and use of fires. The assigned AO must encompass enough terrain for the commander to accomplish his mission and protect his forces. Ideally, the area of operations is smaller than or at least approximates the commander's area of influence.

**3-93.** If the commander's area of influence is smaller than his area of operations, then he must consider his options for extending the size of his area of influence. His options include the following techniques:

- Changing the geographical dispositions of his current systems to increase the size of his area of influence and insure coverage of key areas, installations, and systems.
- Requesting additional assets.
- Requesting boundary adjustments to reduce the size of his AO.

- Accepting the increased risk associated with being unable to provide security throughout the AO.
- Moving his area of influence by phases to sequentially encompass the entire AO.

### **Terrain Management**

**3-94.** The commander assigned an AO is responsible for terrain management within its boundaries. A higher headquarters may dictate that another unit position itself within a subordinate unit's AO, but the commander who is assigned the AO retains final approval authority for the exact placement. This ensures the unit commander controlling the AO knows what units are in his AO and where they are located so that he can deconflict operations and prevent fratricide. Only the owning commander assigns subordinate unit boundaries within the AO.

### **Movement Control**

**3-95.** Units may not move across boundaries into another unit's area of operations (AO) without receiving clearance from the unit owning the AO. Once assigned an AO, the owning unit controls movement throughout the AO. The designation, maintenance, route security, and control of movement along routes within an AO are the responsibility of the owning unit unless the higher echelon's coordinating instructions direct otherwise. Movement routes may be designated as open, supervised, dispatch, reserved, or prohibited. Each route's designation varies based on the factors of METT-TC. Field Manual 55-10, *Movement Control Within a Theater of Operations*, discusses movement planning and control measures.

### **Fires**

**3-96.** The owning unit may employ any direct or indirect fire system without receiving further clearance from superior headquarters within its AO. There are three exceptions. The first and most common is that a unit may not use munitions within its own AO without receiving appropriate clearance if the effects of those munitions extend beyond its AO. For example, if a unit wants to use smoke, its effects cannot cross boundaries into another AO unless cleared with the owning unit. Second, higher headquarters may explicitly restrict, in the OPORD, the use of certain munitions within an AO or parts of an AO, such as long-duration scatterable mines. Third, higher headquarters may impose a restrictive fire support coordinating measure (FSCM) within an AO to protect some asset or facility. These FSCM tend to be linear in nature in a contiguous AO while they are more likely areas in a noncontiguous AO.

**3-97.** The commander may not employ indirect fires across boundaries without receiving clearance from the unit into whose AO the fires will impact. He may employ

direct fires across boundaries without clearance at specific point targets that are clearly and positively identified as enemy.

## Security

**3-98.** The security of all units operating within the AO is the responsibility of the owning commander. This fact does not require that commander to conduct area security operations throughout his AO. (See Chapter 13 for a discussion of area security responsibilities.) He must prevent surprise and provide the amount of time necessary for all units located within the AO to effectively respond to enemy actions. If the commander cannot or chooses not to provide security throughout his AO, he must clearly inform all concerned individuals of when, where, and under what conditions he is not going to exercise this function. These locations are generally depicted using permissive FSCM. The commander of each unit in the AO remains responsible for his unit's local security.

## Airspace Command and Control

**3-99. Army airspace command and control (A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup>) are those actions that ensure the synchronized use of airspace and enhance the command and control of forces using airspace.** The ground maneuver commander manages the airspace below the coordinating altitude through the use of procedural control measures and positive control measures implemented by his air traffic service (ATS) organization. Corps and divisions are the echelons that routinely have A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup> responsibilities although a commander may provide the resources to accomplish this function to a brigade operating independently.

**3-100.** Communications, standardized procedures, and liaison normally provide the commander with his required connectivity with the theater airspace control authority. The commander ensures reliable communications through his area communications network. The commander supervises airspace activities through standardized procedures to prevent real-time conflicts among the various airspace users while achieving the necessary flexibility to ensure the greatest combat effectiveness. The A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup> section of the battlefield coordination detachment (BCD), co-located with the Joint Air Operations Center (JAOC), provides the commander that liaison capability with the ACA. See FM 100-103, *Airspace Command and Control*, and JP 3-52, *Doctrine for Joint Airspace Control in the Combat Zone*, for additional information regarding airspace control doctrine.

## Boundaries

**3-101. Boundaries are graphical control measures used to define the limits of an area of operation.** The commander bases his subordinates' boundaries on

clearly defined terrain features. This requirement is less important if all units in the AO have precision navigation capabilities. Boundaries should not split avenues of approach. Responsibility for an avenue of approach should belong to only one unit. The commander adjusts his boundaries as necessary in response to the evolving tactical situation. Any areas not delegated to a subordinate through the use of boundaries remain the responsibility of the commander.

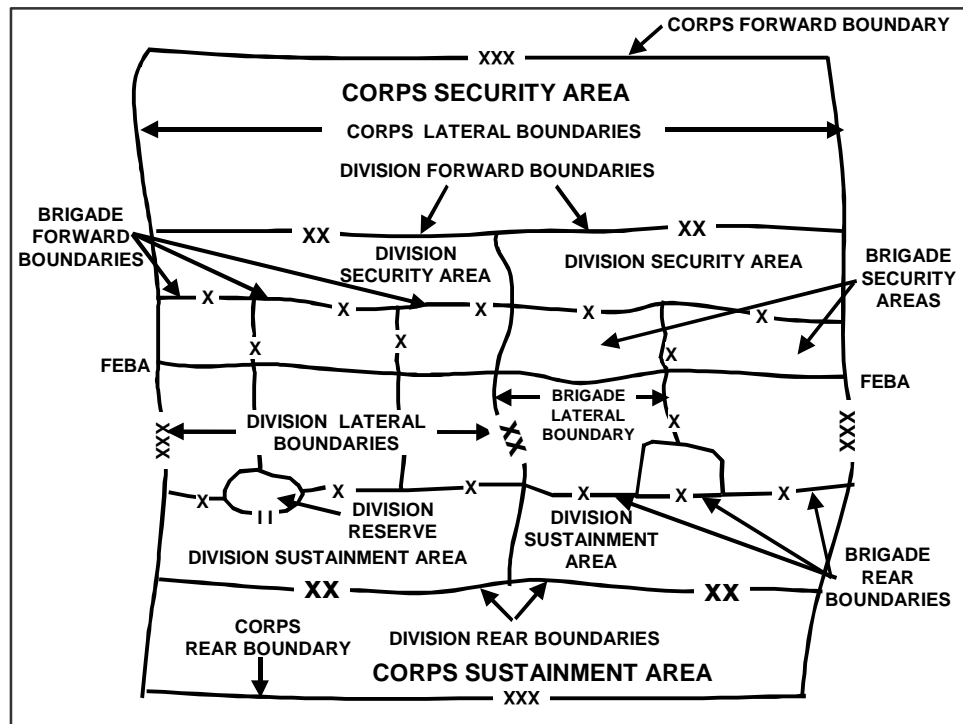
**3-102.** The vertical dimension, or airspace, of the area of operations is inherently permissive because all branches and services require the use of airspace. However, the commander does not control the use of airspace above his AO by employing boundaries. There are procedural and positive airspace control measures available to synchronize military operations in the airspace above the AO. Among the procedural airspace control measures is the coordinating altitude, which is a method used to separate fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft by determining an altitude below which fixed-wing aircraft will normally not fly and above which rotary-wing aircraft will normally not fly. It allows the ground commander to use the airspace above his AO for his organic aviation assets to complement ground maneuver forces, but it is not a boundary for which he has responsibility. The ACA, normally the JFACC, must establish the coordinating altitude, promulgate it through the airspace control plan, address it in the ACO, and include a buffer zone for small-altitude deviations. Coordinating altitudes are permissive airspace control measures.

#### Contiguous and Noncontiguous Areas of Operations

**3-103. A commander has a contiguous AO when all of his subordinate forces' areas of operation share one or more common boundaries. A commander has a noncontiguous AO when one or more of his subordinate forces' areas of operation do not share a common boundary.** The commander can choose to organize his AO so that his subordinates have contiguous or noncontiguous areas of operations.

**3-104.** Distinct forward, rear, and lateral boundaries establish a contiguous AO. The *forward boundary* of an echelon is primarily designated to divide responsibilities between it and its next higher echelon. Decisive or shaping operations directed against enemy forces and systems beyond an echelon's forward boundary are the responsibility of the next higher echelon. The higher echelon headquarters normally assigns the lower echelon a forward boundary based on the higher echelon's scheme of maneuver. Its exact position is determined by its ability to acquire and attack targets in the area between the forward boundary of its subordinates and the echelon's forward boundary. For

example, if a division assigns a forward boundary to a brigade, then the division conducts operations beyond the brigade's forward boundary. The *rear boundary* defines the rearward limits of the unit's area. It usually also defines the start of the next echelon's sustainment area. Brigades are normally the lowest echelon with a designated sustainment area. *Lateral boundaries* extend from the rear boundary to the unit's forward boundary. See Figure 3-10.



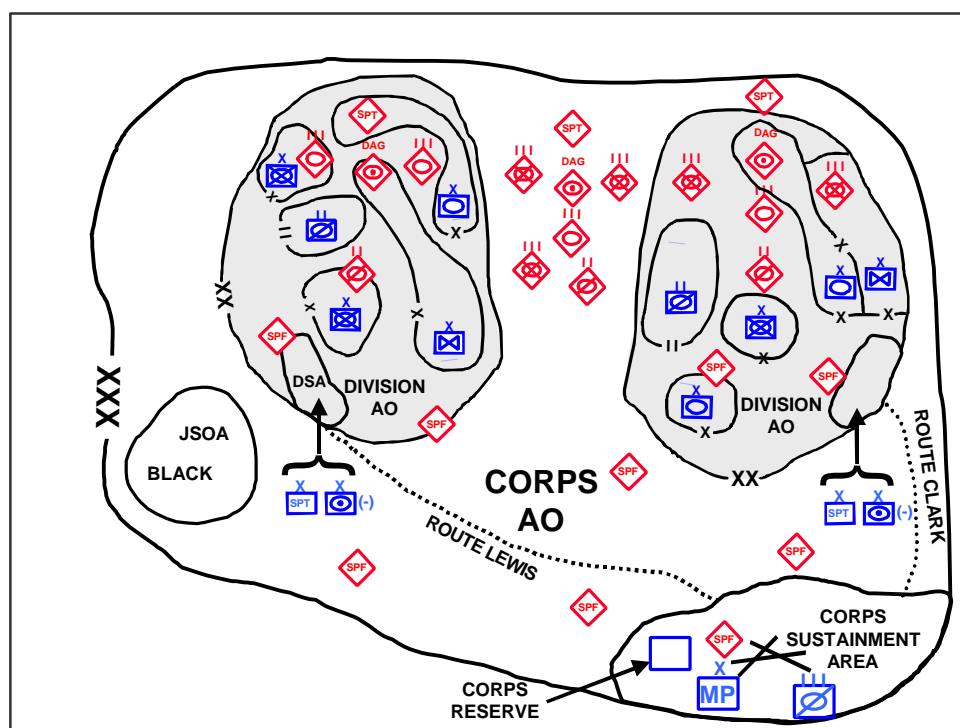
**Figure 3-10. Example of a Corps with Contiguous Areas of Operation**

**3-105.** The commander bases his decision to establish contiguous AOs on his analysis of the factors of METT-TC. Units with contiguous AOs are normally within supporting distance of each other and may be within supporting range. Other reasons why a commander establishes contiguous AOs include:

- Limited size of the area of operation in relation to the number of friendly forces.
- Political boundaries or enemy force concentrations require the establishment of contiguous AOs.
- Reduce risk associated with being defeated in detail because of an incomplete operational picture or when the friendly force is significantly outnumbered.
- Key or decisive terrain in close physical proximity to each other.
- Greater concentration of combat power along a single avenue of advance or movement corridor.

**3-106.** A noncontiguous area of operations does not have distinctive forward, rear, and lateral boundaries. It is established by a boundary that encloses the entire area. Subordinate boundaries will be continuous, 360-degree arcs that, ideally, closely approximate the subordinate unit's area of influence. For example, a typical noncontiguous brigade boundary would normally be placed at the limit of observed fires for its security forces. Because noncontiguous boundaries must provide all-round security, they generally allow for less concentration of combat power along a single axis. Battle positions are not areas of operation since a unit is not restricted from operating outside of its battle position. A commander that deploys his subordinates into battle position is not conducting noncontiguous operations. Chapter 9 defines a battle position.

**3-107.** Operations directed against enemy forces and systems outside of a noncontiguous area of operation are the responsibility of the organization that owns that location. For example, in Figure 3-11 the middle enemy division is the corps' responsibility since it is not within either of the corps' two divisions' AOs.



**Figure 3-11. Example of a Corps with Noncontiguous Areas of Operation**

**3-108.** The commander bases his decision to establish noncontiguous AOs on the analysis of the factors of METT-TC. There is a risk associated with establishing noncontiguous AOs since units with noncontiguous AOs are normally out of supporting range from each other. Overcoming this risk places a premium on common situational

understanding and tactical mobility. Reasons why a commander establishes noncontiguous AOs include:

- Encompassing key and decisive terrain within his area of influence when he has limited numbers of friendly forces for the size of the AO.
- Comparative weakness of the enemy means that subordinates do not have to remain within supporting range or distance of each other and can take advantage of superior situational understanding and tactical mobility.
- Enemy concentrated in dispersed areas requires a corresponding concentration of friendly forces.

**3-109.** Noncontiguous operations place a premium on innovative means of sustainment. A commander whose subordinates have noncontiguous areas of operation has three basic choices for establishing intermittent ground lines of communications with his subordinates:

- Assign a subordinate the mission of providing convoy security for each convoy. For the situation depicted in Figure 3-11 the corps could assign the corps MP brigade with the mission of providing convoy security from each ground convoy traveling between the corps sustainment area and each division's sustainment area.
- Assign a subordinate a mission of providing route security for each sustainment route. For the situation depicted in Figure 3-11 the corps could assign the corps armored cavalry regiment an AO that extends four kilometers on either side of LOCs LEWIS and CLARK and the mission of route security for the time period required for sustainment convoys to travel to and from the two subordinate divisions.
- Assume risk, have the corps support command run convoys with only their organic self-defense capabilities while assigning another unit the mission of responding to enemy contacts beyond a convoy's self defense capability.

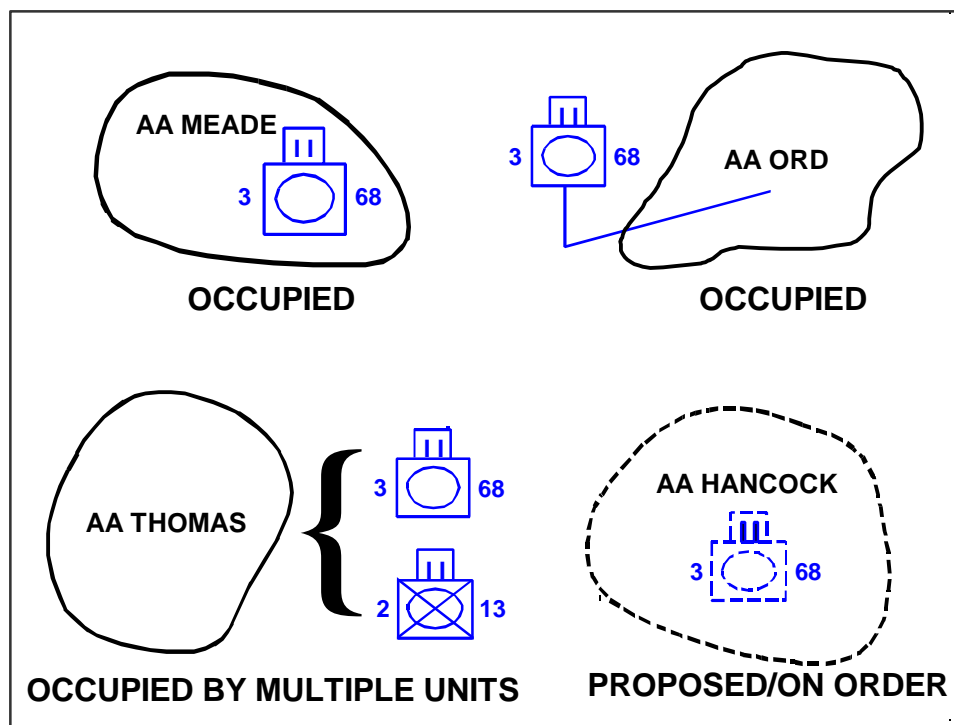
## ASSEMBLY AREAS

**3-110.** An assembly area (AA) is an area a unit occupies to prepare for an operation. Ideally, an AA should provide:

- Concealment from air and ground observation.
- Cover from direct fire.
- Space for dispersion; each AA is separated by enough distance from other AAs to preclude mutual interference.
- Adequate entrances, exits, and internal routes.
- Good drainage and soil conditions that can sustain the movement of the unit's weapon systems.
- Terrain masking of electromagnetic signatures.
- Terrain allowing observation of ground and air avenues into the AA.
- Sanctuary from enemy medium range artillery fires because of its location outside their range.

**3-111.** Each unit is assigned its own AA. In Figure 3-12, the example of multiple units occupying one assembly area is a graphical shortcut taken when the map scale would make depiction of multiple assembly areas unreadable. In reality, AA Thomas would be subdivided into two small AAs, one for each unit. A unit AA is normally within the AO



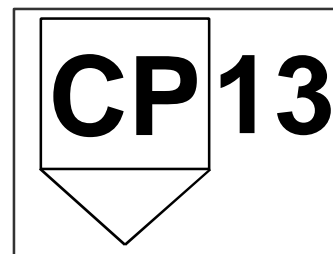


**Figure 3-12. Examples of Assembly Areas**

of another unit. An AA is usually treated as a non-contiguous AO. When assigned an AA, the unit has the same responsibilities as for any other AO. The proper location of AAs contributes significantly to both security and flexibility. It should facilitate future operations so movement to subsequent positions can take place smoothly and quickly by concealed routes. Because of their smaller signature, light units can use AAs closer to the enemy than heavy units without excessive risk of enemy detection. The tactical mobility of heavy units allows them to occupy AAs at a greater distance from the LD than light units.

## CHECKPOINT

**3-112. A checkpoint is a predetermined point on the ground used to control movement and tactical maneuver.** It can also be used as a fire control measure in lieu of the preferred control measure, a target reference point. Checkpoints are useful for orientation. They may be used to supplement phase lines or as substitutes for phase lines. Figure 3-13 depicts Checkpoint 13.

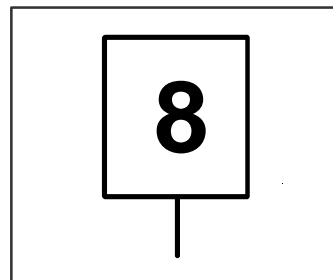


**Figure 3-14.  
Contact Point 8**

## CONTACT POINT

**3-113. A contact point is an easily identifiable point on the terrain where two or more ground units are required to make physical contact.** A

commander establishes a contact point where a phase line crosses a lateral boundary or on other identifiable terrain as a technique to insure coordination between two units. Figure 3-14 depicts Contact Point 8.



**Figure 3-13.  
Checkpoint 13**

**3-114.** Normally, when the units required to make contact are both moving, their mutual higher commander designates the location of the contact point and the time of contact. When one unit is stationary, that unit's commander normally designates the location of the contact point and the meeting time, and transmits this information to the commander of the moving unit.

## DIRECT FIRE CONTROL MEASURES

**3-115.** The small unit commander communicates to his subordinates the manner, method, and time to initiate, shift, and mass fires, and when to disengage by the use of direct fire control measures. The commander should control his unit's fires so he can direct the engagement of enemy systems to gain the greatest effect. The commander uses intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) and reconnaissance to determine the most advantageous way to use direct fire control measures to mass the effects on the enemy and reduce fratricide from direct fire systems. He must understand the characteristics of weapon systems and available munitions (such as the danger to unprotected soldiers when tanks fire discarding sabot ammunition over their heads or near them). Direct fire control measures defined in this manual include engagement criteria, engagement priorities, sectors of fire, and target reference points. Other direct fire control measures, such as fire patterns (e.g., frontal, cross, or depth) and techniques of fires (e.g., simultaneous, alternating, or observed), are addressed in platoon and company maneuver manuals.

### Engagement Criteria

**3-116. Engagement criteria are those circumstances that allow engagement of an enemy force without a specific command to do so.** For example, a company commander could tell his 1st Platoon to wait until three enemy tanks are in their engagement area before opening fire. Another example is a battalion commander telling one of his company commanders not to engage an approaching enemy motorized rifle battalion (MRB) until it commits itself to an avenue of approach. Engage

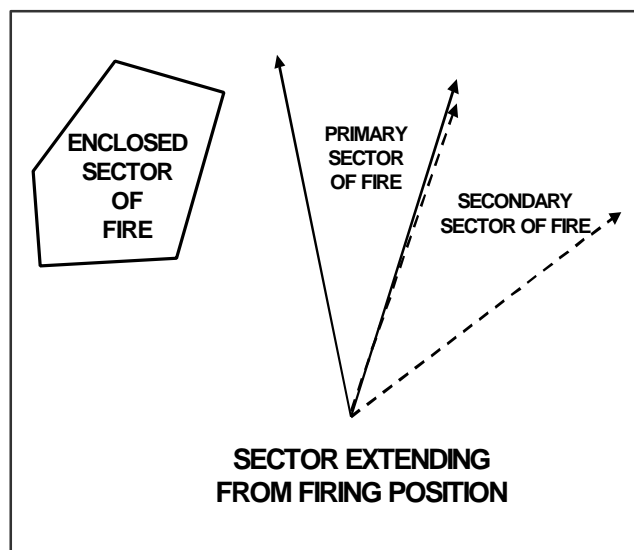
ment criteria are established in the direct fire plan. Commanders and leaders of small tactical units use engagement criteria in conjunction with engagement priorities and other direct fire control measures.

### Engagement Priorities

**3-117. Engagement priority specifies the order in which the unit engages enemy systems or functions.** The commander assigns engagement priorities based on the type or level of threat at different ranges to match organic weapon systems capabilities against enemy vulnerabilities; engagement priorities are situationally dependent. The commander uses engagement priorities to distribute fires rapidly and effectively. Subordinate elements can have different engagement priorities. For example, the commander establishes his engagement priorities so that his M2 BFVs engage enemy infantry fighting vehicles or armored personnel carriers while his M1 tanks engage enemy tanks. Normally, the most dangerous targets are engaged first, followed by targets in depth.

### Sectors of Fire

**3-118. A sector of fire is that area assigned to a unit, individual, or crew-served weapon within which it will engage targets as they appear in accordance with established engagement priorities.** See Figure 3-15. It is used primarily at battalion and below. Each sector of fire can extend from a firing position to the maximum



**Figure 3-15. Sectors of Fire**

engagement range of the weapon, or it can be an enclosed area at a distance from the firing position. To increase the commander's ability to concentrate fires in a certain area, he should assign each unit or weapon system a primary sector of fire and a secondary sector of fire. The primary sector is that area in which the assigned unit, individual, or crew-served weapon is initially responsible for engaging and defeating the enemy. Fire shifts to the secondary sector, on order, when there are no targets in the primary sector, or

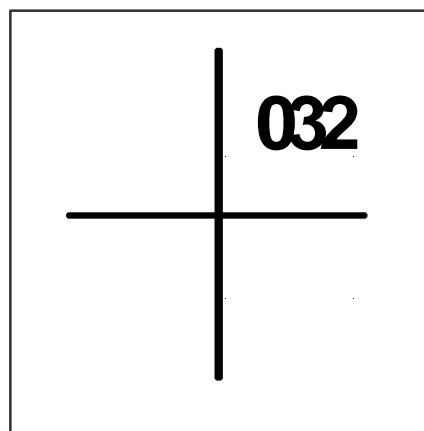
when the commander needs to cover the movement of another friendly element. This secondary sector of fire should correspond to another element's primary sector of fire to obtain mutual support. Subordinate commanders may impose additional fire control measures as required.

#### Target Reference Point

**3-120. A target reference point (TRP) is an easily recognizable point on the ground, such as a building or a road junction, used in conjunction with engagement areas and sectors of fire to initiate, distribute, and control fires.**

Maneuver leaders at battalion and below designate TRPs to define unit or individual sectors of fire and observation, usually within an engagement area. A TRP can also designate the center of an area where the commander plans to

rapidly distribute or converge fires. A task force commander designates TRPs for his company teams. Company commanders designate TRPs for their platoons, sections, and, in some cases, individual weapons. Once designated, the echelon fire support officer can also designate TRPs as indirect fire targets by using the standard target symbol with letters and numbers. Figure 3-16 depicts the symbol for TRP 032.



**Figure 3-16. Target Reference Point**

#### FIRE SUPPORT COORDINATING MEASURES

**3-121.** Commanders assigned an AO employ fire support coordinating measures (FSCM) to facilitate the rapid engagement of targets and simultaneously provide safeguards for friendly forces. Fire support coordinating measures are either permissive or restrictive. Boundaries are the basic FSCM. (See page 3-26.) The fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) recommends FSCM to the commander. These recommendations are based on the commander's guidance, location of friendly forces, scheme of maneuver, and anticipated enemy actions. Once established they must be entered into or posted on all command and control displays controlled by the commander. Field Manual 6-20, *Doctrine for Fire Support*, explains the use of all FSCM in more detail.

#### Permissive FSCM

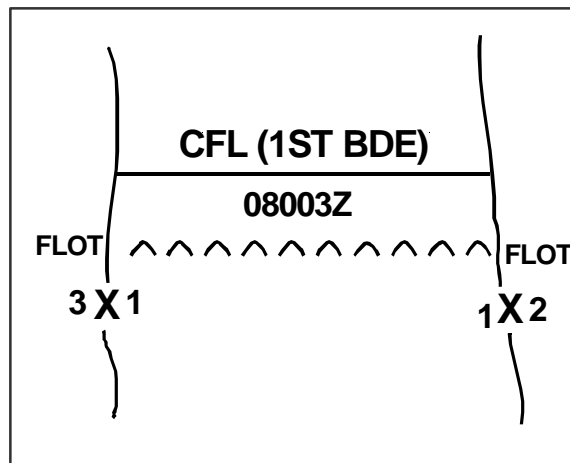
**3-122.** The primary purpose of permissive measures is to facilitate the attack of targets. Once established, further coordination is not required to engage targets affected by the measure. Permissive FSCM include a coordinated fire line, fire support coordination

line, and free fire area. With the establishment of a permissive measure, no further coordination is required for the engagement of targets affected by the measure.

**3-123. A coordinated fire line (CFL) is a line beyond which conventional surface fire support, such as mortars and field artillery, may fire at any time within the AO of the establishing head-quarters without additional coordination.** The

purpose of the CFL is to expedite the attack of targets beyond the CFL but short of the fire support

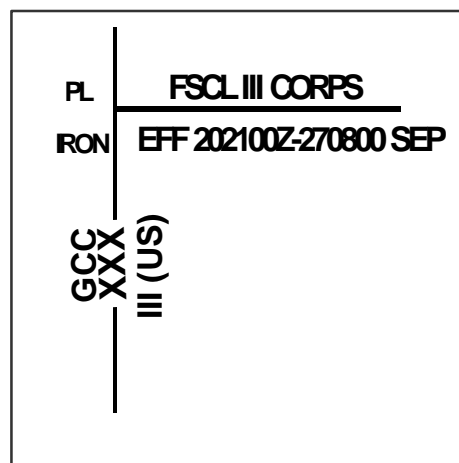
coordination lines. Brigades or divisions usually establish a CFL, although a maneuver battalion may establish one. It is located as close as possible to the establishing unit without interfering with maneuver forces to open up the area beyond to fire support. A higher echelon may consolidate subordinate unit CFLs. If this occurs, any changes to the subordinate CFLs are coordinated with the subordinate headquarters. See Figure 3-17.



**Figure 3-17. Coordinated Fire Line**

**3-124. The fire support coordination line (FSCL) is a FSCM that is established and adjusted by appropriate land or amphibious force commanders within their boundaries in consultation with superior, subordinate, supporting, and affected commanders.** The FSCL facilitates the expeditious attack of surface targets of opportunity beyond the coordinating measure. The FSCL applies to all fires of air, land, and sea-based weapon systems using any type of ammunition. Forces attacking

targets beyond an FSCL must inform all affected commanders in sufficient time to allow necessary reaction to avoid fratricide. Supporting elements attacking targets beyond the



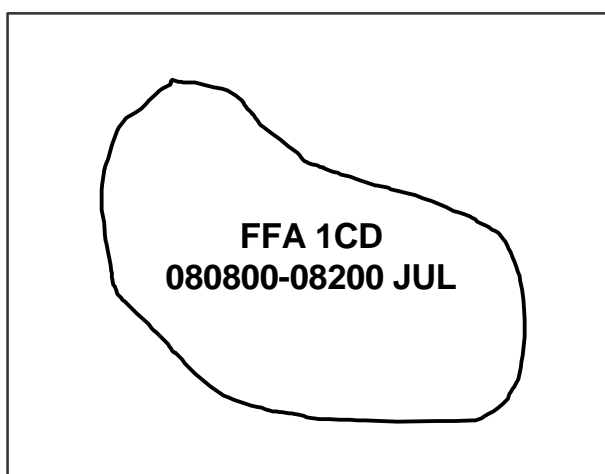
**Figure 3-18. Fire Support Coordination Line**

FSCL must ensure that the attack will not produce adverse effects on, or to the rear of, the line. Short of an FSCL, all air-to-ground and surface-to-surface attack operations are controlled by the appropriate land or amphibious force commander. The FSCL should follow well-defined terrain features. Coordination of attacks beyond the FSCL is especially critical to commanders of air, land, and special operations forces. In exceptional circumstances, the inability to conduct this coordination will not preclude the attack of targets beyond the FSCL. However, failure to do so may increase the risk of fratricide and could waste limited resources. See Figure 3-18.

**3-125. A free fire area (FFA) is a specific designated area into which any weapon system may fire into without additional coordination with the establishing headquarters.**

Normally, it is established on identifiable terrain by division or higher headquarters. See

Figure 3-19.



**Figure 3-19. Free fire area**

## **Restrictive FSCM**

**3-126.** A restrictive measure prevents fires into or beyond the control measure without detailed coordination. The primary purpose of restrictive measures is to provide safeguards for friendly forces. Restrictive FSCM include a restrictive fire area, restrictive fire line, airspace coordination area, and no fire areas. The establishment of a restrictive measure imposes certain requirements for specific coordination before the engagement of those targets affected by the measure. The primary purpose of restrictive measures is to provide safeguards for friendly forces.

**3-127. A restrictive fire area (RFA) is an area in which specific restrictions are imposed and into which fires that exceed those restrictions will not be delivered without coordination with the establishing headquarters.** The purpose of the RFA is to regulate fires into an area according to the stated restrictions, such as no unguided conventional or dud-producing munitions. Maneuver battalion or larger ground forces normally establish RFAs. On occasion a company operating independently may establish a RFA. Usually, it is located on identifiable terrain, by grid or

by a radius (in meters) from a center point. The restrictions on a RFA may be shown on a map or overlay, or reference can be made to an operations order that contains the restrictions. See Figure 3-20.

**3-128. A restrictive fire line (RFL) is a line established between converging friendly forces (one or both may be moving) prohibiting fires or the effects of direct and indirect fires from crossing the line without coordination with the affected force.**

The purpose of the line is to prevent interference between converging friendly forces. The next higher common commander of the

converging forces establishes the RFL. Located on identifiable terrain, it is usually located closer to the stationary force — if there is one — than to the moving force. See Figure 3-21.

**3-129. The airspace coordination area (ACA) is a restrictive fire support coordination measure that establishes a three-dimensional block of airspace in which friendly aircraft are reasonably safe from friendly surface fires.** Aircraft and indirect fire are separated by time, space, or altitude. The purpose of the ACA is to allow the simultaneous attack of targets near each other by fixed-wing aircraft and other fire support means. There are several techniques that may be used in this role. The technique selected depends on the time available, tactical situation, unit

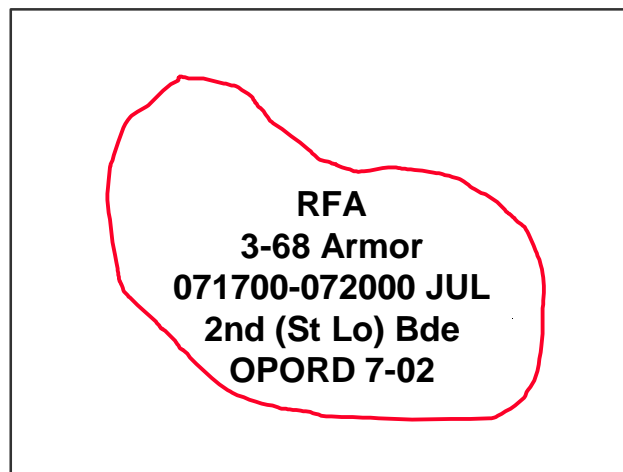


Figure 3-20. Restrictive Fire Area

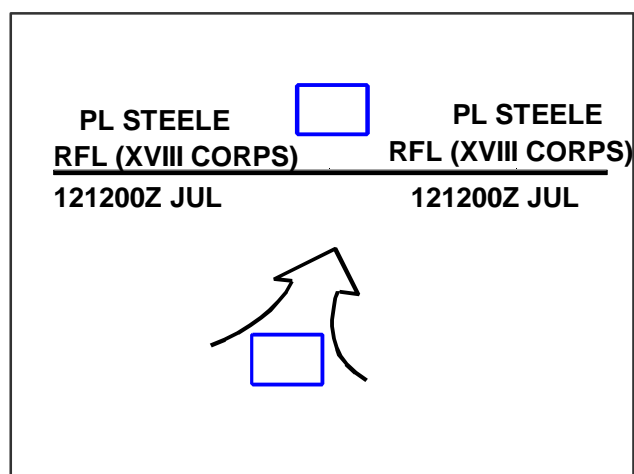
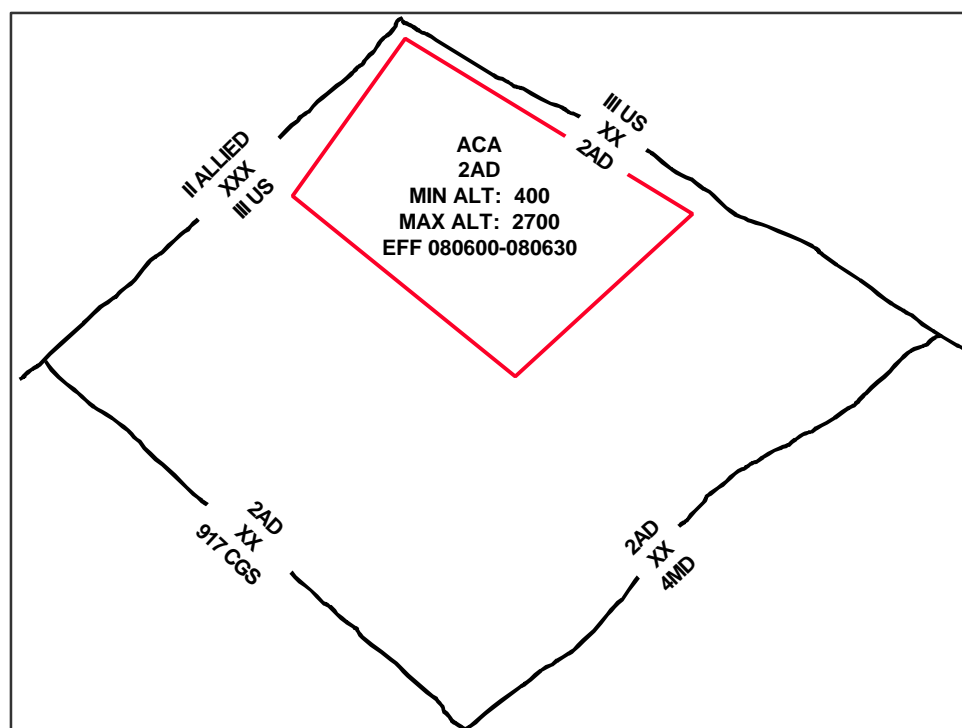


Figure 3-21. Restrictive Fire Line

SOPs, and state of training. There are two types of ACAs: formal and informal. Field Manual 100-103, *Army Airspace Command and Control*, defines airspace coordination measures.

**3-130.** The airspace control authority establishes formal ACAs at the request of the appropriate ground commander. This is normally a separate brigade or higher echelon commander. Formal ACAs require detailed planning. The vertical and lateral limits of the ACA are designed to allow freedom of action for air and surface fire support for the greatest number of foreseeable targets.



**Figure 3-22. An Example of a Formal Airspace Coordination Measure**

**3-131.** The echelon fire support cell with the army airspace command and control (A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup>) element and the fire direction center coordinate its location. It is located above the target area as recommended to the fire support cell by the air-liaison element. The type of aircraft and the ordnance dictate the size of the area. Vital information defining the formal ACA includes minimum and maximum altitudes, a baseline designated by grid coordinates at each end, the width of the ACA from either side of the baseline, and effective times. See Figure 3-22.

**3-132.** The maneuver commander may establish informal ACAs. He may substitute aircraft and surface fires by distance (lateral, altitude, and a combination of lateral and

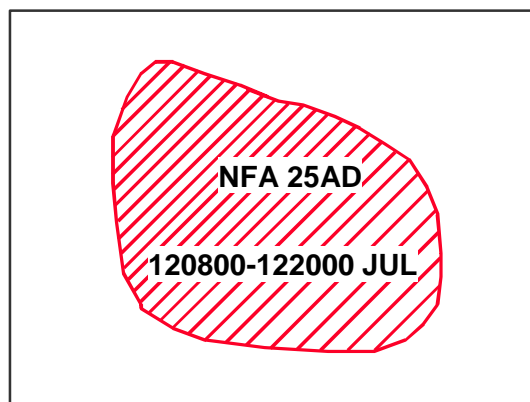


altitude) or by time. Lateral separation is effective for coordinating fires against targets that are adequately separated by at least 500 meters from flight routes to ensure aircraft protection from the effects of friendly fires. An example of a lateral separation technique is: "Aircraft stay west of grid line 62." Altitude separation is effective for coordinating fires when aircraft remain above indirect fire trajectories and their effects. This technique is effective when aircrews and firing units engage the same or nearby targets. An example of altitude separation is: "Aircraft remain above 3000 feet mean sea level in quadrant northwest of grid PK7325."

**3-133.** A combination of lateral and altitude separation is the most restrictive technique for aircraft and may be required when aircraft must cross the gun target line of a firing unit. Time separation requires the most detailed coordination and may be required when aircraft must fly near indirect fire trajectories or ordnance effects. The commander must coordinate the timing of surface fires with aircraft routing. This ensures that even though aircraft and surface fires may occupy the same space, they do not do so at the same time. All timing for surface fires will be based on a specific aircraft event time. Fire support personnel and tactical air controllers should select the separation technique that requires the least coordination without adversely affecting timely fires or the aircrew's ability to safely complete the mission.

**3-134. A no fire area (NFA) is an area where no fires or effects of fires are allowed.** There are two exceptions to this rule:

- The establishing headquarters may approve fires within the NFA on a mission basis.
- When an enemy force within a NFA engages a friendly force, it may engage the enemy to defend itself.



**Figure 3-23. No Fire Area**

A division or corps normally imposes this restrictive measure. See Figure 3-23.

## **FIRE SUPPORT TARGETS**

**3-135. Fire support targets are geographical points or objects that are aiming points for fire support systems. There are point targets, circular targets, rectangular targets, and linear targets.** A commander by group has tar-

gets for firing at the same time. He may also attack individual targets and groups of targets in series or in a predetermined sequence. When this occurs, it is referred to as a series of targets. See Figure 3-24.

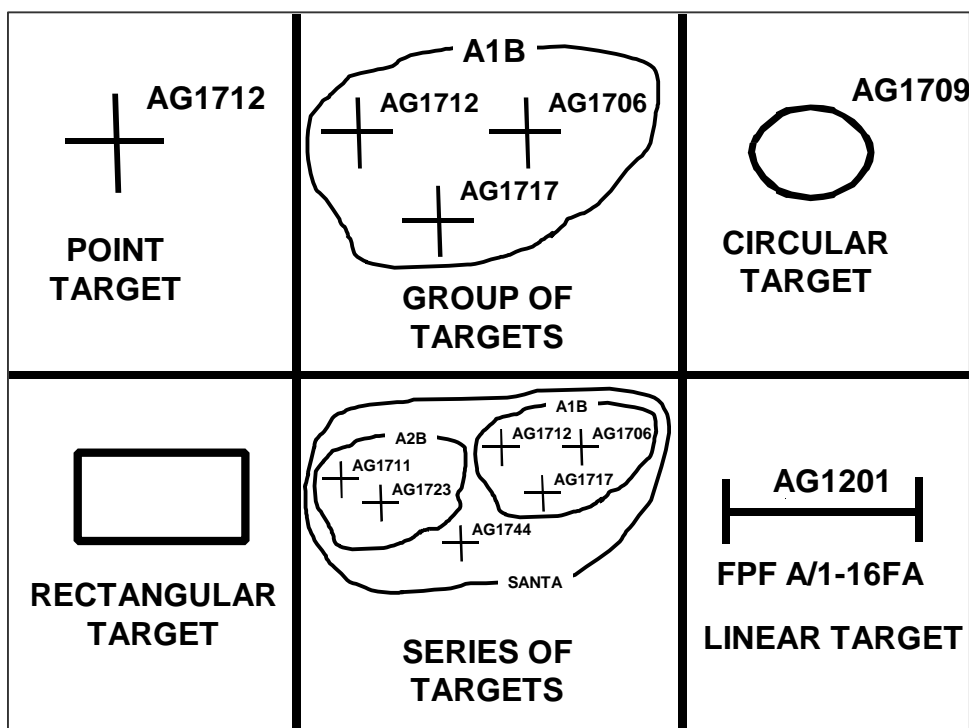


Figure 3-24. Targets

#### FORWARD LINE OF OWN TROOPS

3-136. The forward line of own troops (FLOT) is a line that indicates the most forward positions of friendly forces of the main body at a specific time including the main body's security forces.

It may be beyond, at, or short of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) depending on the tactical situation. (Chapter 9 defines the

FEBA with other defensive control measures.) It does not include small, long-range reconnaissance assets and similar stay behind forces. Friendly forces forward of the FLOT

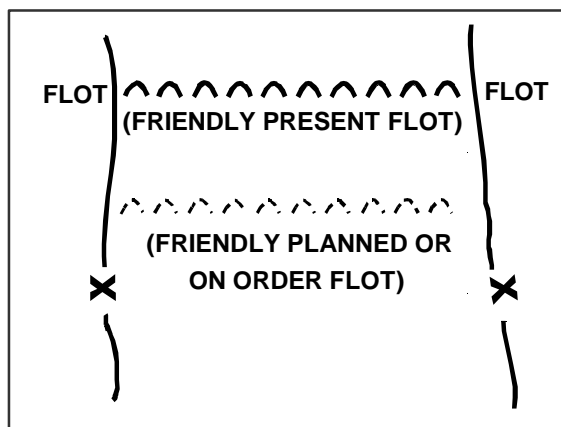


Figure 3-25. Forward Line of Own Troops

may have a restrictive fire coordination measure, such as an RFA, placed around them to preclude fratricide. Figure 3-25 depicts the symbol for the FLOT.

## LINE OF CONTACT

**3-137. The line of contact (LC) is a general trace delineating the location where friendly and enemy forces are engaged.** In the defense a LC is often synonymous with the FLOT. In the offense a LC is often combined with the line of departure (LD). Figure 3-26 depicts the symbol for the LC.

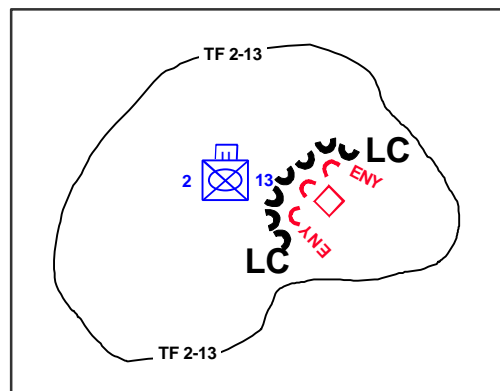


Figure 3-26. Line of Contact

## NAMED AREA OF INTEREST

**3-138. A named area of interest (NAI) is the geographical area where information that will satisfy a specific information requirement can be collected.** NAIs are usually selected to capture indications of enemy courses of action but also may be related to battlefield and environment conditions. The shape of the NAI symbol is

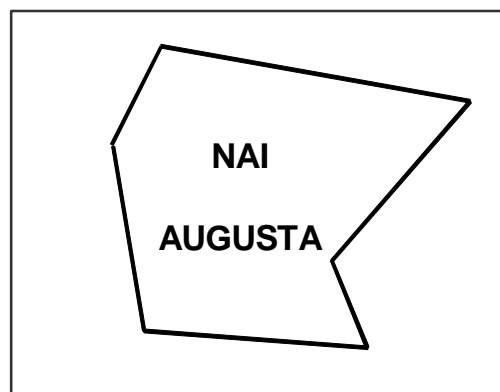


Figure 3-27. Named Area of Interest

tailored to the actual area to be observed, rather than being a prescribed shape. It is possible to redesignate an NAI as a targeted area of interest upon confirmation of enemy activity within the area, allowing a commander to mass the effects of his combat power to bear upon that area. Figure 3-27 depicts NAI Augusta.

## OBSTACLE CONTROL MEASURES

**3-139. Obstacle control measures are specific measures that simplify the granting of obstacle-emplacing authority while providing obstacle control.** Figure 3-28 shows the obstacle-control measure graphics. Obstacle control measures are:

- Zones.
- Belts.

- Groups.
- Restrictions.

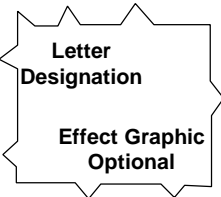
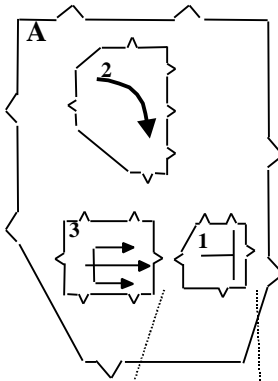
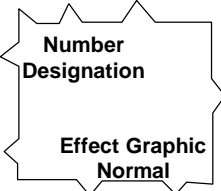
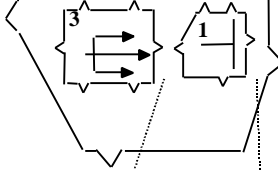
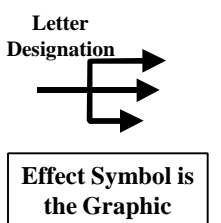
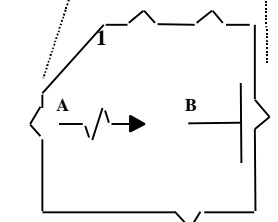
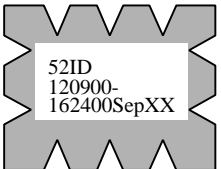
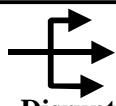



OBSTACLE CONTROL MEASURE	EMPLACEMENT AUTHORITY		GRAPHIC	EXAMPLE
	FROM	TO		
ZONE	CORPS	DIV		
	DIV	BDE		
BELT	CORPS	BDE <sup>1</sup>		
	DIV	BDE <sup>1</sup>		
	BDE	TF		
GROUP	DIV	BDE <sup>2</sup>		
	BDE	TF <sup>2</sup>		
	TF	CO TRP		
ORA	ANY			
1 - Rarely done by corps and divisions, but possible.				
2 - Done only when directed and integrated with corps or division fire plans.				
Graphic Effects Symbols	 Disrupt		 Fix	 Turn
				 Block

Figure 3-28. Obstacle Control Measure Graphics

These graphic control measures are summarized in Figure 3-28. Unless he is the senior land component commander within a theater of operations, a commander assigned an

AO does not have emplacement authority for other than protective obstacles unless specifically granted the authority by a higher headquarters.

**3-140.** Procedural measures include the restricting of specific obstacles by type, munitions, or point locations in a verbal or written order. They also include higher commanders tasking subordinate units to construct or execute specific obstacles. These are known as directed or reserve obstacles and are specified tasks found in the unit order. Field Manual 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, discusses the procedural methods to both restrict and direct obstacles in detail.

### Obstacle Zones

**3-141. Obstacle zones are a graphic control measure that corps and division commanders use to grant obstacle-emplacement authority to brigades (including armored cavalry regiments and other major subordinate units).** Obstacle zones are permissive in nature allowing brigades to place reinforcing obstacles to support their scheme of maneuver without interfering with future operations.

**3-142.** If the obstacle zone encompasses the entire brigade AO, another graphic is unnecessary. Commanders may designate the entire AO as an obstacle zone, with the unit boundaries defining the geographical limits of the zone. Obstacle zones do not cross brigade boundaries. Commanders assign obstacle zones to a single subordinate unit to ensure unity of effort, just as they would defensive AOs or battle positions. This keeps tactical obstacle responsibility along the same lines as control of direct and indirect fires. This does not normally create a vulnerability on the boundary between units since commanders base both areas of operation and obstacle zones on defined avenues of approach.

**3-143.** Commanders do not normally assign an obstacle effect (block, fix, turn, or disrupt) to an obstacle zone. This allows the subordinate commander flexibility in using obstacles. The commander should establish priorities between different obstacle zones.

### Obstacle Belts

**3-144. Obstacle belts are the graphic control measure that corps, division, and brigade echelon commanders use to constrain tactical obstacle employment.** They plan obstacle belts within assigned obstacle zones to grant obstacle-emplacement authority to their major subordinate units. Obstacle belts also focus obstacles in support of the brigade scheme of maneuver and ensure that obstacles do not interfere with the maneuver of any higher headquarters.

**3-145.** Obstacle belts are restrictive, but also direct a subordinate unit to construct one or more obstacles to achieve an effect in the area. They do not specify the type or number of obstacles. Obstacle belts do not cross unit boundaries for the same reasons as discussed in obstacle zones. A single unit is responsible for a belt ; however, a commander may assign more than one belt to a unit.

**3-146.** A brigade commander normally assigns an obstacle effect and priority to each obstacle belt. As with the obstacle zone, the target and relative location are apparent. The addition of a specific obstacle effect gives purpose and direction to battalion task force obstacle planning. When brigade commanders assign an obstacle effect, they ensure that obstacles within the belt complement the brigade fire plan.

**3-147.** The commander at the corps, division, or brigade echelon may authorize emplacement authority for certain types of protective obstacles outside of obstacle zones or belts. Normally, the commander authorizes company team and base commanders to emplace protective obstacles within 500 meters of their positions depending on the factors of METT-TC. The commander usually limits the types of obstacles a unit may use for protective obstacles that are outside of obstacle-control measures. For example, allowing only wire and command-detonated mines outside of control measures for protective obstacles and requiring that minefields be fenced on all sides to prevent fratricide.

## Obstacle Groups

**3-148. Obstacle groups are one or more individual obstacles grouped to provide a specific obstacle effect.** Task forces use obstacle groups to ensure that company teams emplace individual obstacles supporting the task force's scheme of maneuver. In rare cases, brigades, divisions, or even corps may use obstacle groups for specific tactical obstacles. Also, units integrate obstacle groups with direct- and indirect-fire plan in detail. Brigade and task force commanders can plan them anywhere in the obstacle zones or belts, respectively.

**3-149.** Unlike obstacle zones or belts, obstacle groups are not areas but relative locations for actual obstacles. Commanders normally show obstacle groups using the obstacle-effect graphics. When detailed planning is possible (to include detailed on-the-ground reconnaissance), commanders may show obstacle groups using individual obstacle graphics.

**3-150.** The company team commander and the engineer can adjust obstacles in the group if the intent and link to the fire plan remain intact. Company team commanders

make minor changes to obstacles and fire-control measures based on terrain realities. For example, a commander may move a fixing obstacle group and direct-fire target reference points a few hundred meters to avoid having them masked by rolling terrain. A major change to the obstacle-group location requires the approval of the commander who ordered the obstacle group emplacement.

### Individual Obstacles

**3-151.** Each type of individual obstacle, such as abatis, antitank ditch, booby traps, mines and minefields, roadblocks, craters, and wire obstacles has its own associated graphic. Once unit constructs an individual obstacle, the obstacle's location is recorded and reported through the chain of command. Commanders must report individual obstacles in sufficient detail so any unit moving through the area can bypass or reduce the obstacle without excessive risk. Each headquarters is responsible to ensure exact obstacle locations are disseminated throughout their organization. Individual obstacle graphics are rarely shown on maps above the battalion echelon. Individual obstacle graphics are not depicted in this manual. Field Manual 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, defines individual obstacles and establishes the graphics for them.

### Obstacle Restrictions

**3-152.** Commanders may use obstacle restrictions to provide additional obstacle control and to limit the specific types of obstacles used, such as no buried mines. These restrictions ensure that subordinates do not use obstacles with characteristics that impair future operations. It also allows commanders to focus the use of limited resources for the decisive operation(s) by restricting their use elsewhere. Commanders also may use restriction to prevent subordinates from emplacing obstacles in a certain area. This type of restriction may be shown graphically as an obstacle-restricted area (ORA). The commander with emplacement authority uses ORAs to restrict obstacle placement. The ORA graphic depicts the area effected, the unit imposing the restriction, and the restrictions in effect.

### PHASE LINES

**3-153. Phase lines (PLs) are lines established to control progress of units and coordinate an operation. Phase lines are not boundaries unless designated as such and do not establish any specific responsibilities between units, unless the operations order establishes specific responsibilities.** When possible, they should be placed along easily recognizable, terrain features, such as roads, railroad tracks, rivers, and ridgelines, to ensure easy identification. As with

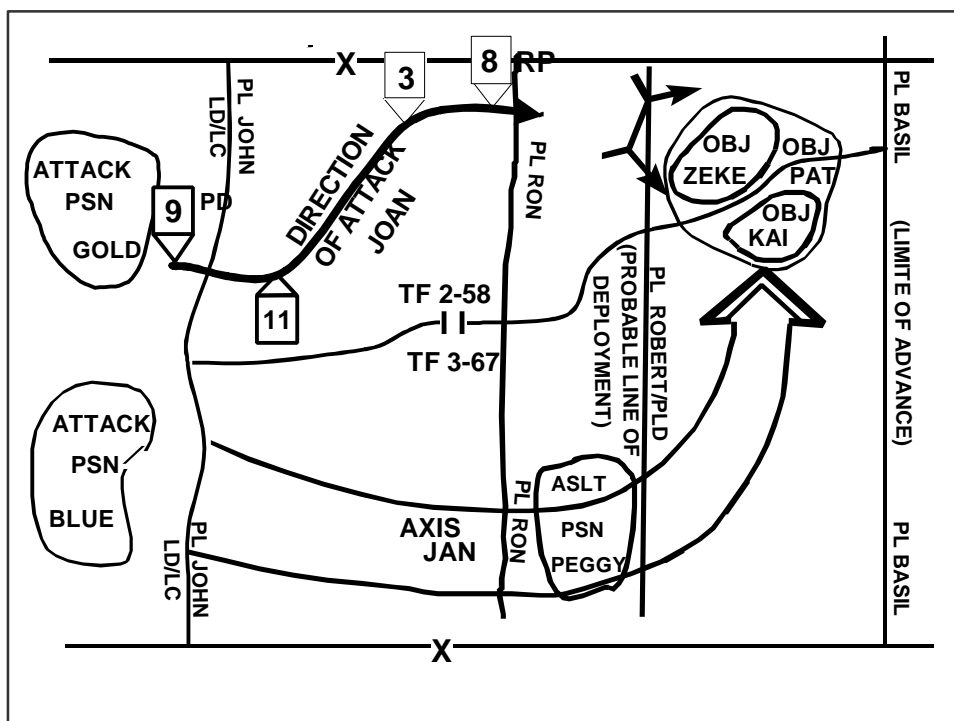


Figure 3-29. Phase Lines used with other Control Measures

boundaries, this is less important if all units are equipped with precision navigation devices. (See Figure 3-29.) Some phase lines have additional designations for specific purposes, such as a line of departure (LD) or a probable line of deployment (PLD). These specific purposes are discussed in Chapters 5 and 7.

#### POSITION AREAS FOR ARTILLERY

**3-154. Position areas for artillery (PAA) are areas assigned to artillery units where individual artillery systems can maneuver to increase their survivability. A PAA is not an AO for the artillery unit occupying it. They are assigned for terrain management purposes. Establishing a PAA lets other subordinate units**

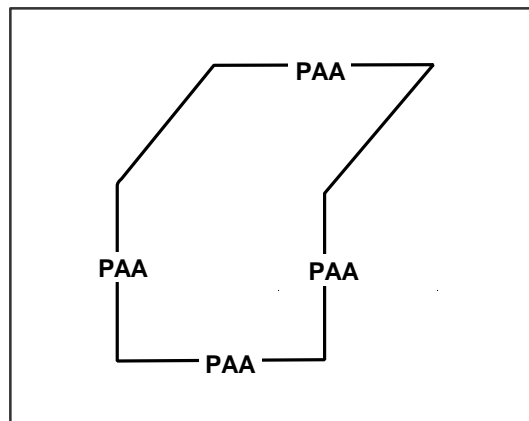


Figure 3-30. Position Area for Artillery

**know they should avoid occupying that same terrain, thus avoiding enemy counterbattery fires. A PAA is normally four square kilometers in size for a four-gun Paladin**



platoon and nine square kilometers in size for a multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) platoon with three launchers. See Figure 3-30.

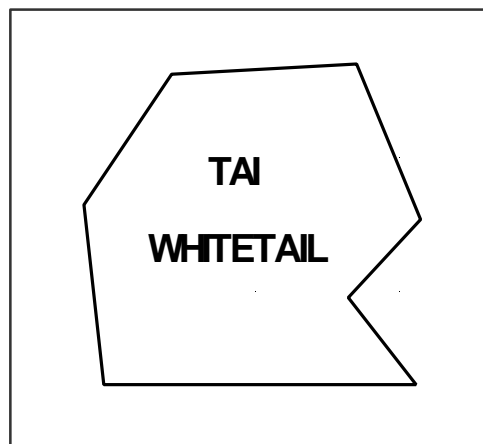
**3-155.** The maneuver echelon operations officer (G-3 or S-3) of the unit that owns the terrain establishes the PAA. The occupying artillery unit does not have the same authority and responsibilities toward the PAA that are associated with a unit assigned an AO. (See Paragraphs 3-75 to 3-83 for a discussion of those responsibilities.) For example, other units can move through a PAA without clearing that movement with the artillery unit. The artillery unit occupying a PAA establishes liaison with the unit that owns the AO where the PAA is located. This liaison is usually performed by the echelon fire support officer in accordance with standard command and support relationships. For a discussion of common command and control relationships, see FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*. For a discussion of artillery missions, see FM 6-20, *Fire Support*.

#### TARGETED AREA OF INTEREST

**3-156. A targeted area of interest (TAI) is the geographical area or point along a mobility corridor where successful interdiction will cause the enemy to abandon a particular course of action or require him to use specialized engineer support to continue, where he can be acquired and engaged by friendly forces.** The commander designates TAIs where he believes his unit can best attack high-payoff targets. The commander should design the shape of a

TAI based on the type of target and on the weapon system intended to engage that target, instead of a prescribed shape. They are normally cued by a surveillance asset,

which includes unmanned aerial vehicles, combat observation and lasing teams, long-range surveillance units, and special operations forces. Figure 3-31 depicts TAI Whitetail.



**Figure 3-31. Targeted Area of Interest**

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# **PART TWO: OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS**

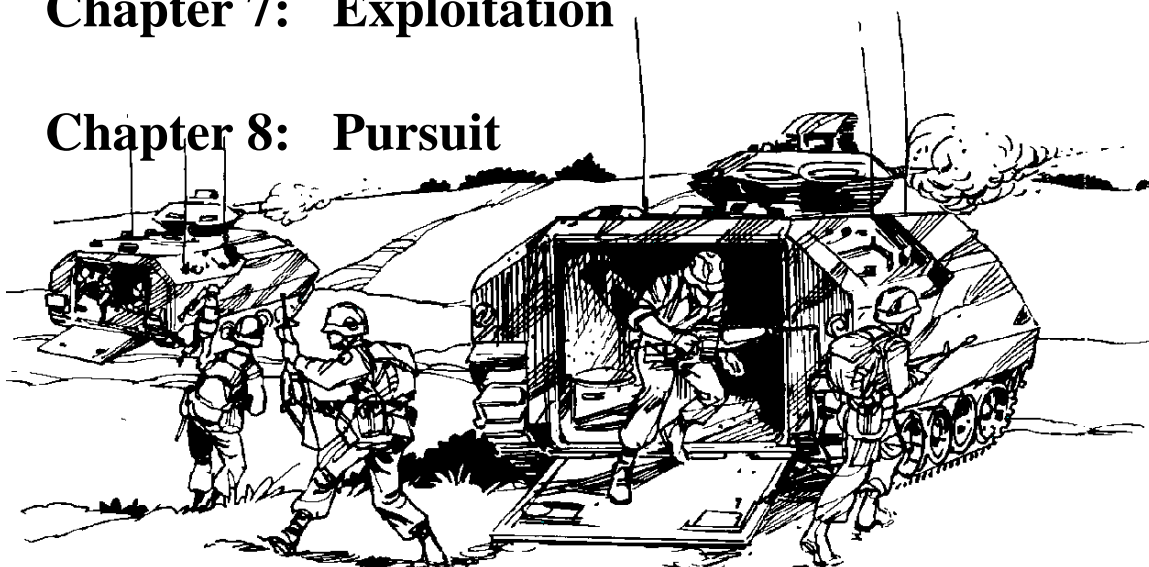
**Chapter 4: The Basics of the Offense**

**Chapter 5: Movement to Contact**

**Chapter 6: Attack**

**Chapter 7: Exploitation**

**Chapter 8: Pursuit**



*“In war the only sure defense is the offense, and the efficiency of the offense depends on the warlike souls of those conducting it”*

**GEN Patton, *War As I Knew It***

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*"To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory, is the secret of successful war."*

Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson, 1863

## CHAPTER 4

# THE BASICS OF THE OFFENSE

**Offensive actions are combat operations designed primarily to destroy the enemy.** A commander may also take offensive actions to deprive the enemy of resources or decisive terrain, deceive or divert the enemy, develop intelligence, or hold an enemy in position. This chapter discusses the basics of the offense in the order outlined in the adjacent contents text box. These basics apply to all offensive actions.

**4-2.** The commander seizes, retains, and exploits the initiative in his conduct of offensive actions. Even in the defense, wresting the initiative from the enemy requires offensive action.

**4-3.** Offensive actions are either force- or terrain-oriented. Force-oriented operations focus on the enemy's condition. Terrain-oriented operations focus on seizing and retaining control of terrain and facilities. Most offensive operations combine force and terrain operations.

### TYPES OF OFFENSIVE ACTIONS

**4-4.** Types of offensive actions are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Entry operations, while offensive in nature, are one of

the six subordinate forms of force-projection operations. Considerations for the airborne and air assault components of entry operations are addressed in Appendix C.

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## MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

**4-5. Movement to contact is a type of offensive action designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact.** It is normally employed when the enemy situation is vague or not specific enough to conduct an attack. A *search and attack* is a specialized technique of conducting a movement to contact in an environment of noncontiguous areas of operation. Chapter 5 discusses movement to contact.

## ATTACK

**4-6. An attack is a type of offensive action that defeats an enemy force, seizes and secures terrain, or both.** Movement, supported by fires, normally characterizes the conduct of an attack. However, based on his analysis of the factors of METT-TC, the commander may decide to conduct an attack using only fires. An attack differs from a movement to contact because enemy dispositions are at least partially known, which allows the commander to achieve greater synchronization. This enables the commander to mass the effects of the attacking force's combat power more effectively in an attack than in a movement to contact.

**4-7.** The commander can launch an attack to achieve different results or purposes. Long usage has given names to some of these subordinate forms of attack: ambush, spoiling attack, counterattack, raid, feint, and demonstration. The commander's intent and the factors of METT-TC determine which, if any, form of attack is chosen. He can conduct each form as either a hasty or a deliberate attack. Chapter 6 discusses the attack and its subordinate forms.

## EXPLOITATION

**4-8. Exploitation is a type of offensive action that rapidly follows-up gains to take full advantage of battlefield success.** The objectives of exploitation are to accomplish the mission and complete the enemy's disintegration. Chapter 7 discusses exploitation.

## PURSUIT

**4-9. A pursuit is a type of offensive action designed to destroy an enemy force attempting to escape.** A pursuit normally follows a successful exploitation. However, if it is apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield, any other type or subordinate form of offensive action can transition into a pursuit. Chapter 8 discusses the pursuit.

## COMMON OFFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

**4-10.** This section defines those common offensive control measures that a commander uses to synchronize the application of the effects of his combat power in alphabetical order. The commander uses the minimum control measures required to successfully complete the mission while providing the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation.

### ASSAULT POSITION

**4-11. An assault position is a covered and concealed position short of the objective from which final preparations are made to assault the objective.**

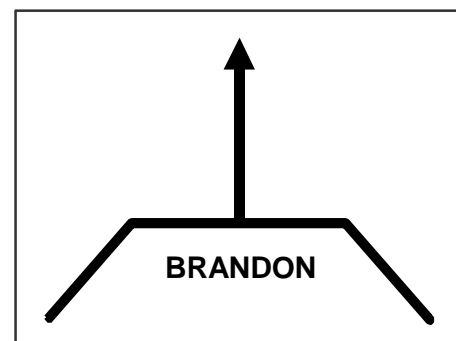
These final preparations can involve tactical considerations, such as a short halt to coordinate the final assault, reorganize to adjust to combat losses, or make necessary adjustments in the attacking force's dispositions. These preparations can also involve technical items, such as engineers conducting their final prepare-to-fire checks on obstacle clearing systems and the crews of plow and roller equipped tanks removing their locking pins. It may be located in close proximity to either a final coordination line (FCL) or a probable line of deployment (PLD). (Pages 4-6 and 4-8 define a FCL and a PLD respectively.)

### ASSAULT TIME

**4-12. The assault time is a control measure imposed by the higher headquarters in operations to achieve simultaneous results by several different units.** It synchronizes the moment the enemy feels the effects of friendly combat power. It is similar to the time on target control measure used by the field artillery. The assault time establishes the moment to attack the initial objectives throughout the geographical scope of the operation. It is used instead of a *time of attack* (defined on page 4-10) because of the different distances that must be traversed by the different elements of the force, known obstacles that will be encountered en route, and differences in each unit's tactical mobility.

### ATTACK BY FIRE POSITION

**4-13. An attack by fire position is a control measure that a commander uses to designate the general position from which a unit conducts the tactical task of attack by fire.** (Ap-



**Figure 4-1. Attack by Fire Position "Brandon"**

pendix B defines the tactical task of attack by fire.) The purpose of these positions is to increase the supported force's freedom of maneuver. Attack-by-fire positions indicate the general location and direction from which the unit engages an objective that is not going to be assaulted by friendly forces. An attack-by-fire position does not indicate the specific site. Attack-by-fire positions are rarely applicable to units larger than company size. Figure 4-1 depicts attack-by-fire position BRANDON.

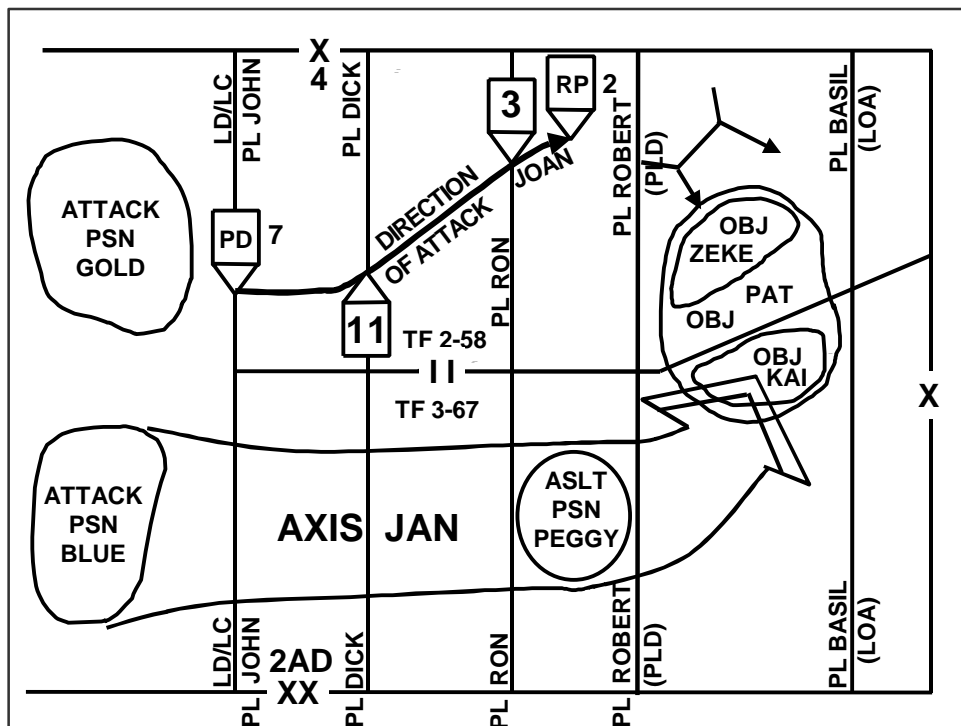


Figure 4-2. Attack Positions Used with other Common Offensive Control Measures

## ATTACK POSITION

**4-14. The attack position is the last position an attacking force occupies or passes through before crossing the line of departure.** An attack position facilitates the deployment and last-minute coordination of the attacking force before it crosses the LD. It is located short of the LD and offers cover and concealment for the attacking force and is used primarily at battalion level and below. Whenever possible, units move through the attack position without stopping. An attacking unit occupies an attack position for a variety of reasons; for example, when the unit is waiting for specific results from preparatory fires or when it is necessary to conduct additional coordination, such as a forward passage of lines. If the attacking unit occupies the attack position, it stays there for the shortest amount of time possible to avoid offering the enemy a lucr a-



tive target. (Figure 4-2 shows attack positions BLUE and GOLD used in conjunction with other common offensive control measures.)

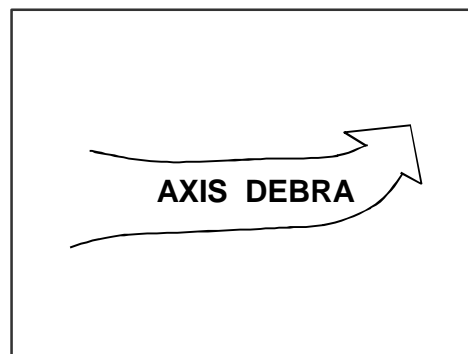
#### AXIS OF ADVANCE

**4-15. An axis of advance designates the general area through which the bulk of a unit's combat power must move.**

There are three primary reasons why a commander uses an axis of advance.

First, the commander uses an axis of advance to direct the bypass of locations that could delay the progress of the advancing force, such as known contaminated areas.

Second, the commander's use of an axis of advance indicates that he does not require the force to clear the AO as it advances. The third primary reason for using an axis of advance is to indicate to a unit involved in offensive encirclement, exploitation, or pursuit operations the need to move rapidly toward an objective. Figure 4-3 depicts axis of advance DEBRA.

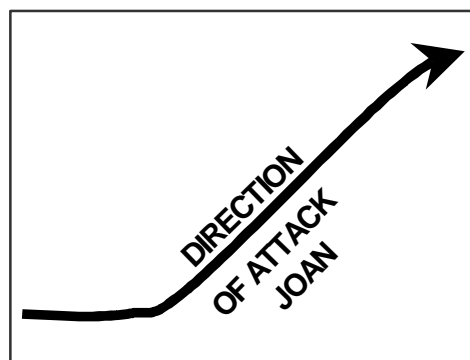


**Figure 4-3. Axis of Advance DEBRA**

#### DIRECTION OF ATTACK

**4-16. The direction of attack is a specific direction or assigned route a force uses and does not deviate from when attacking.**

It is a restrictive control measure. The commander's use of a direction of attack maximizes his control over the movement of his unit and is often used during night attacks. The commander establishes a direction of attack



**Figure 4-4. Direction of Attack JOAN**

tack through a variety of means, such as target reference points, checkpoints, global positioning system (GPS) way points, the use of ground surveillance radar (GSR) to track the attack force, and the use of munitions. Target reference points placed on recognizable terrain provide the commander with the capability to rapidly shift fires and reorient his maneuver forces. When using a direction of attack, the commander designates a point of departure (PD). (Figure 4-4 depicts direction of attack JOAN.)

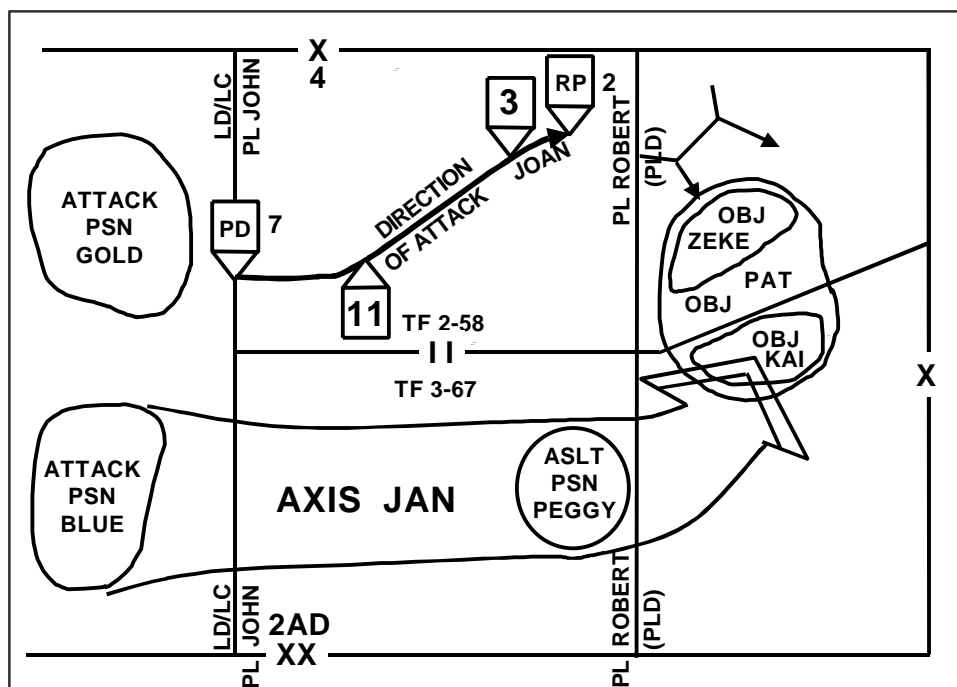


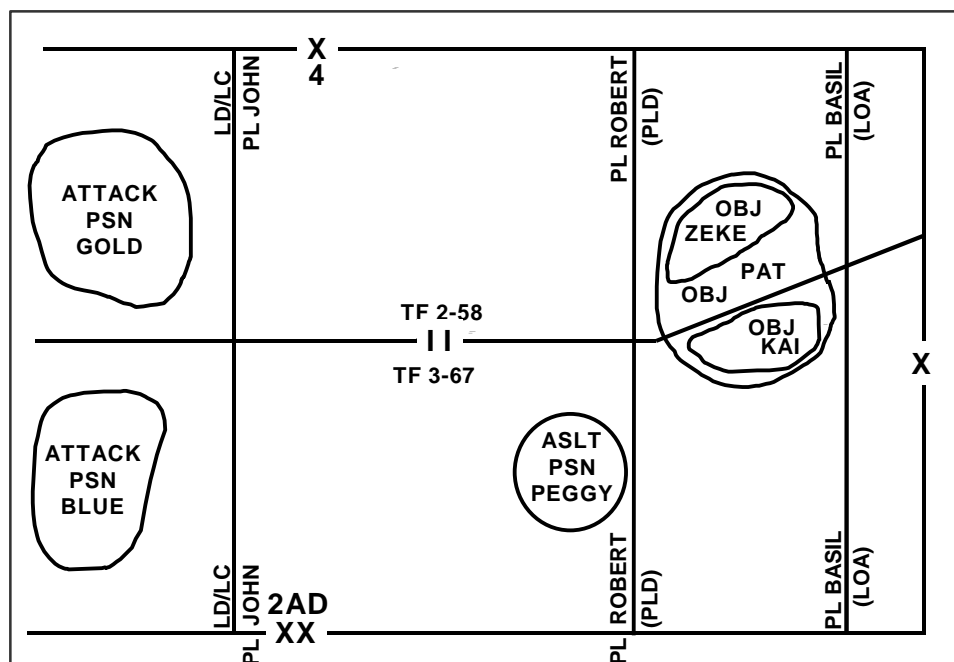
Figure 4-5. Final Coordination Line (FCL) ROBERT used in conjunction with other offensive Control Measures

#### FINAL COORDINATION LINE

4-17. The final coordination line (FCL) is a phase line close to the enemy position used to coordinate the lifting or shifting of supporting fires with the final deployment of maneuver elements. It should be easily recognizable on the ground. The FCL is not a fire support coordinating measure. (Figure 4-5 shows PL ROBERT as the FCL for the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade.)

#### LIMIT OF ADVANCE

4-18. The limit of advance (LOA) is a specific phase line used to control forward progress of the attack. The attacking unit does not advance any of its elements or assets beyond the LOA, but the attacking unit can push its security forces to that limit. A commander usually selects a linear terrain feature perpendicular to the direction of attack on the far side of the objective as the LOA because such a terrain feature is easily identifiable. The commander employs a LOA to prevent the over extension of the attacking force and reduce the possibility of fratricide by fires supporting the attack. The commander positions a LOA far enough beyond the objective to allow for the establishment of a hasty defense. The use of an LOA prevents units from exploiting success and launching a pursuit; therefore, it should only be used

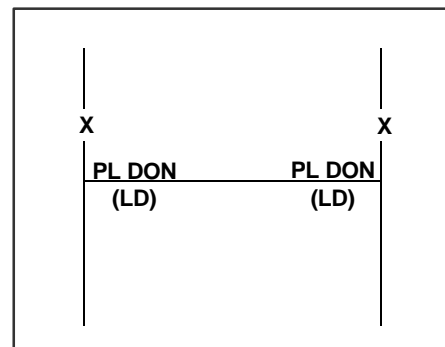


**Figure 4-6. Limit of Advance used with other Common Control Measures**

if the commander does not want the unit to conduct an exploitation or pursuit. A forward boundary is always an LOA, but an LOA is not necessarily a forward boundary. In fact, a LOA and the unit's forward boundary should rarely coincide because of the resulting limitations that a forward boundary places upon supporting fires beyond the forward boundary. Figure 4-6 shows PL BASIL used as the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade's limit of advance.

#### LINE OF DEPARTURE

**4-19. The LD is a phase line crossed at a prescribed time by troops initiating an attack.** The purpose of the LD is to coordinate the advance of the attack echelon so that its elements strike the enemy in the order and at the time desired. It can also be used to facilitate the coordination of fires. Generally, it should be perpendicular to the direction the attacking force will take on its way to the objective. Friendly forces should control the line of departure. When possible, the LD is selected so that the terrain the attack unit traverses before crossing the LD



**Figure 4-7. PL DON as a LD**

provides sufficient cover for the attacking unit's final deployment into a combat formation before crossing the LD. In many cases the line of departure is also the line of contact because the unit in contact is conducting the attack from its current positions. Figure 4-7 depicts PL DON as the LD. (Chapter 3 contains a definition for a line of contact.)

## OBJECTIVE

**4-20. An objective is a location on the ground used to orient operations, phase operations, facilitate changes of direction, and provide for unity of effort.**

Objective can be either terrain- or enemy-oriented. Terrain objectives should be easily identifiable on the ground to facilitate their recognition. The commander normally assigns his subordinate commanders only their final objectives. The commander selects intermediate objectives as necessary to facilitate mission accomplishment. Figure 4-8 depicts OBJ STEVE. Objective STEVE is further broken down into two subordinate objectives, OBJ JOHN and OBJ HARRY.

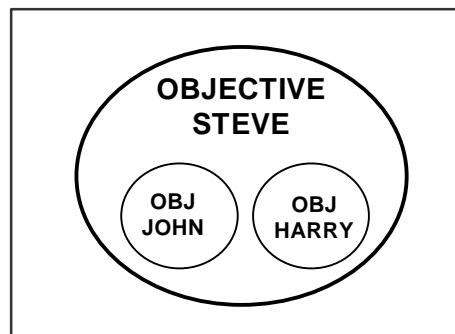


Figure 4-8. Objective Steve

## POINT OF DEPARTURE

**4-21. The PD is the point where the unit crosses the LD and begins moving along a direction of attack.**

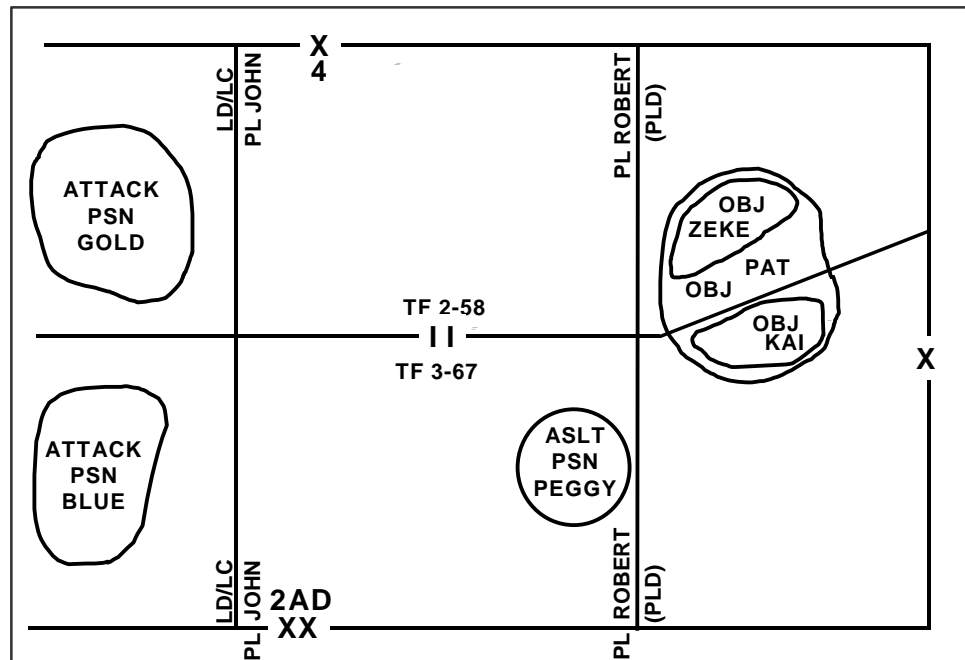
Units conducting reconnaissance and security patrols and other operations in a low visibility environment commonly use a PD as a control measure. Figure 4-9 depicts PD 7.



Figure 4-9. Point of Departure 7

## PROBABLE LINE OF DEPLOYMENT

**4-22. A probable line of deployment is a phase line that a commander designates as the location where he intends to completely deploy his unit into assault formation before beginning the assault.** The PLD is used primarily at battalion level and below and is usually a linear terrain feature perpendicular to the direction of attack and recognizable under conditions of limited visibility. It is often

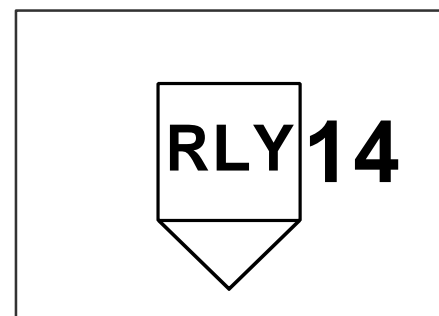


**Figure 4-10. Probable Line of Deployment JIM  
used with other control measures**

used when the unit does not cross the LD in its assault formation. The PLD should be located outside the range where the enemy can place the attacking force under effective direct fire. It has no utility except as it relates to the enemy. In Figure 4-10, PL JIM is also the PLD.

## **RALLY POINT**

**4-23. A rally point is an easily identifiable point on the ground at which units can reassemble and reorganize if they become dispersed. Alternatively it is an easily identifiable point on the ground at which aircrews and passengers can assemble and reorganize following an incident requiring a forced landing. Light forces**



**Figure 4-11. Rally Point 14**

conducting a patrol or an infiltration commonly use this control measure. The objective rally point (ORP) is a rally point established on an easily identifiable point on the ground where all elements of the infiltrating unit assemble and prepare to attack the objective. It must be near the infiltrating unit's objective; however, there is no standard

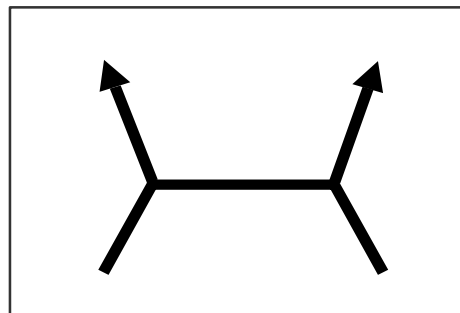
distance from the objective to the ORP. It should be far enough away from the objective so that the infiltrating unit's attack preparations and other activities will not be detected by the enemy. Figure 4-11 depicts Rally Point 14.

#### SUPPORT BY FIRE POSITION

**4-24. A support by fire position is a control measure that a commander uses to designate the general position from which a unit conducts the tactical task of support by fire.** (Ap-

pendix B defines the tactical task of attack by fire.) The purpose of these positions is to increase the supported force's freedom

of maneuver by placing direct fires on an objective that is going to be assaulted by a friendly force. Support-by-fire positions are located within the maximum friendly direct fire range of the enemy positions. They are selected so that the moving assault force does not mask its supporting fires. For this reason, support-by-fire positions are normally located on the flank of the assault force, elevated above the objective if possible. Support-by-fire positions are rarely applicable to units larger than company size. The support-by-fire position graphic depicted in Figure 4-12 indicates the general location and direction from which the unit provides fires; it does not indicate a specific site.



**Figure 4-12. Support-by-fire Position**

#### TIME OF ATTACK

**4-25. The time of attack is the moment the leading elements of the main body cross the LD or the point of departure (PD) in a night attack.** When determining the time of attack, the commander considers the time required for his subordinate to:

- Conduct the necessary reconnaissance, prepare plans, and issue orders.
- Synchronize plans between all subordinate units.
- Complete attack preparations, such as precombat inspections.
- Move to the LD or PD.

**4-26.** The time of attack is normally expressed as H-hour. However, H-hour can also designate the hour to implement a phase of an operation. The headquarters planning the offensive operation specifies the exact meaning of the term.

## FORMS OF OFFENSIVE MANEUVER

**4-27.** The forms of offensive maneuver are envelopment, turning movement, frontal attack, penetration, and infiltration. The commander generally chooses one of these as a foundation upon which to build a course of action. The higher commander rarely specifies the specific form of offensive maneuver; however, his guidance and intent, along with the mission that includes implied tasks, may impose constraints such as time, security, and direction of attack that narrow the form of offensive maneuver to one alternative. Additionally, the characteristics of the area of operations and the enemy's dispositions also help determine the form of offensive maneuver selected. A single operation may contain several forms of offensive maneuver, such as a frontal attack to clear a security area followed by a penetration to create a gap in enemy defenses. This is followed by an envelopment to destroy the enemy's first line of defense.

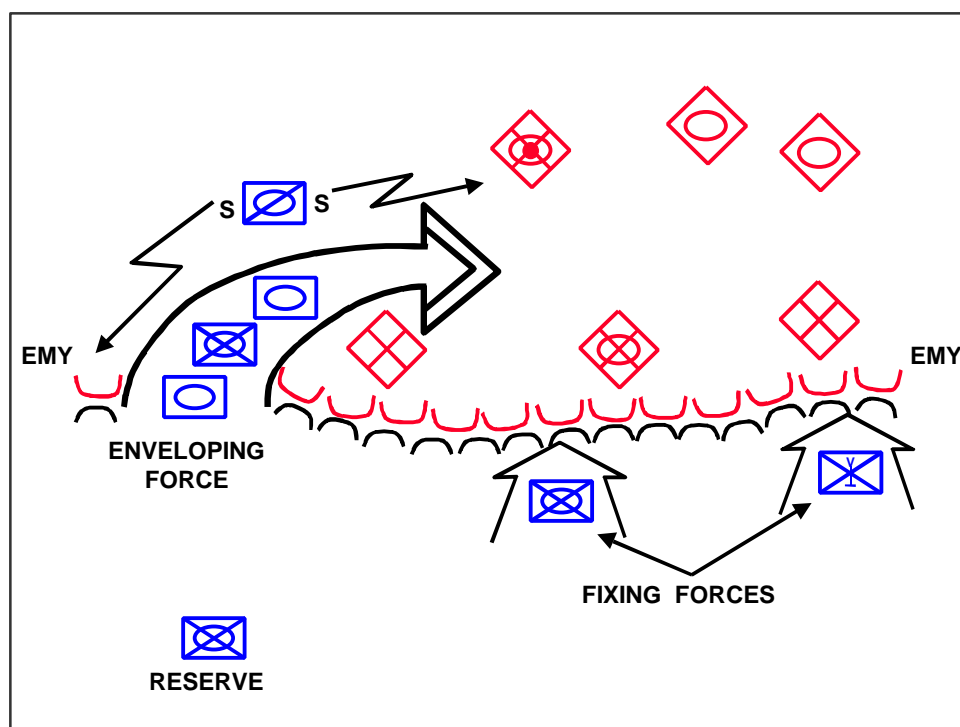
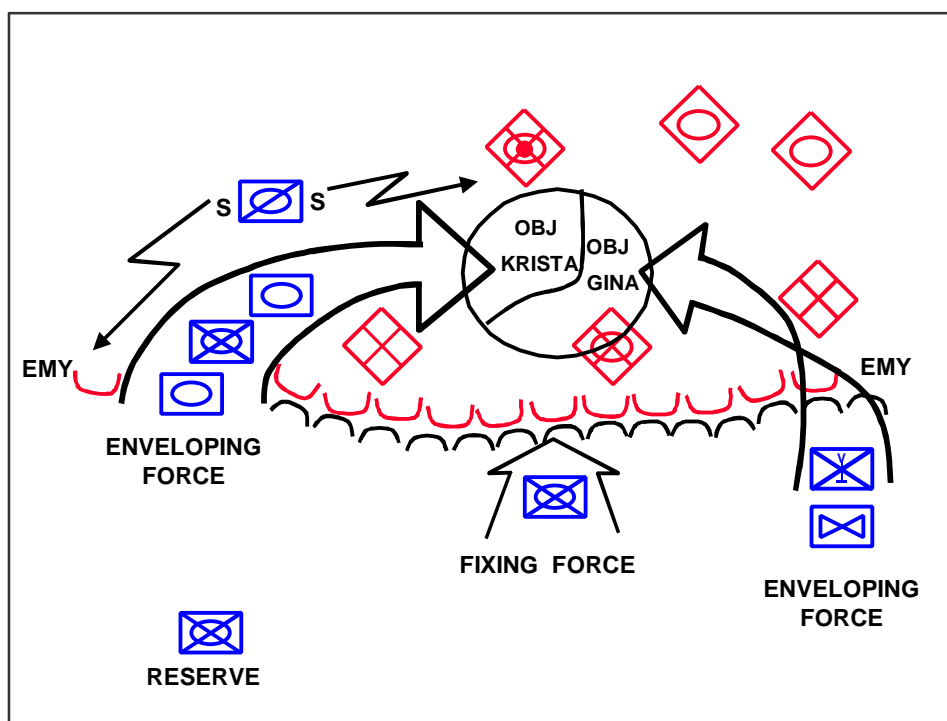


Figure 4-13. Single Envelopment

## ENVELOPMENT

**4-28.** An envelopment is a form of offensive maneuver that focuses on seizing a geographical objective in the enemy rear or destroying specific enemy forces to cut his escape routes and subject him to destruction in his **current positions**. The commander's decisive operation focuses on attacking an assailable flank. It avoids the enemy's strength — his front — where the effects of his

fires and obstacles are the greatest. Generally, a commander prefers to conduct an envelopment instead of a penetration or a frontal attack because the attacking force tends to suffer fewer casualties while having the most opportunities to destroy the enemy. An envelopment also produces the greatest psychological shock on the enemy. If no assailable flank is available, the attacking force creates one. The three varieties of envelopment are single envelopment, double envelopment, and encirclement. (See Figures 4-13 and 4-14.) For a discussion of encirclement operations see Appendix D.



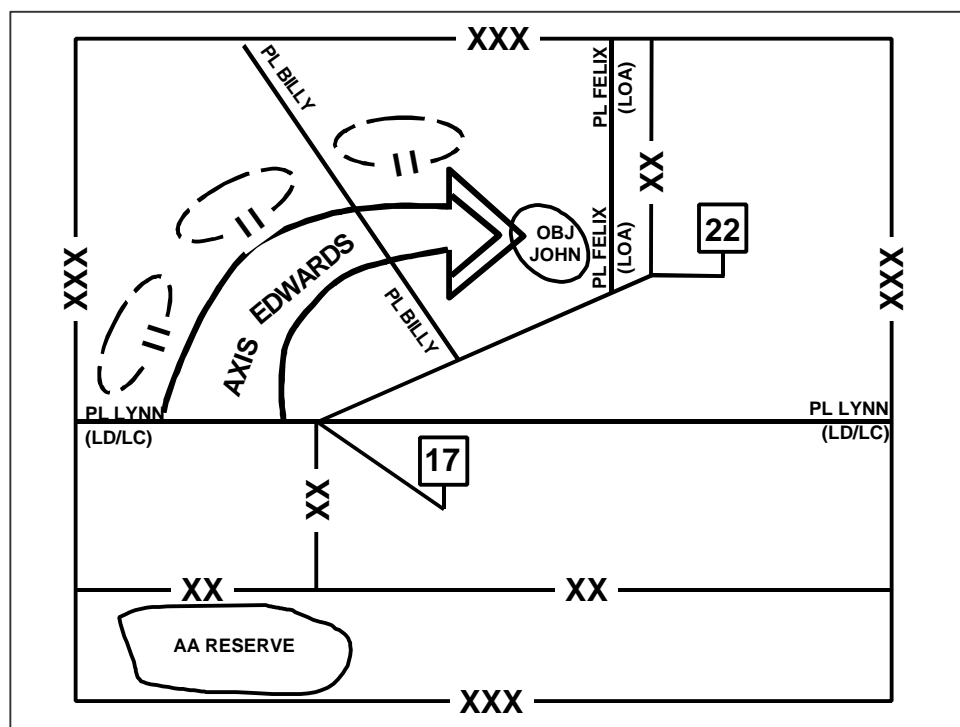
**Figure 4-14. Double Envelopment**

**4-29.** Single and double envelopments force the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously to meet the converging efforts of the attack. A double envelopment generally requires a preponderance of force and can be difficult to control. A force seeking to execute a double envelopment must also have a substantial mobility advantage over the defender. A unit performs a double envelopment by conducting a frontal attack in the center to fix the enemy in place while enveloping both hostile flanks. Because of the force ratios involved, normally only division and larger-size organizations have the resources to execute a double envelopment.



### Organization of Forces

**4-30.** The commander envisioning a single envelopment organizes two forces : the *enveloping force* and the *fixing force*. The enveloping force strikes an assailable enemy flank and avoids his main strength enroute to the objective. The fixing force conducts a frontal attack to fix the enemy in his current positions to prevent his escape and reduce his capability to react against the enveloping force. A commander executing a double envelopment organizes his forces into three principle tactical groups : two enveloping forces and a fixing force. The commander also allocates forces to conduct reconnaissance, security, reserve, and sustainment activities.



**Figure 4-15. Example Control Measures used during the Conduct of an Envelopment**

### Control Measures

**4-31.** The commander at a minimum designates areas of operations for each unit participating in the envelopment by using boundaries. He also designates phase lines, battle positions, contact points, and appropriate fire coordination measures, such as a restricted fire line (RFL) or boundary between converging forces, and any other control measures he feels is necessary to control the envelopment. Figure 4-15 is an example of control measures used when conducting a single envelopment.

### Planning for an Envelopment

**4-32.** A successful envelopment depends largely on the degree of surprise the commander is able to achieve against his opponent. The attacking force secures surprise by making unexpected maneuvers, rapidly changing the tempo of ongoing operations, avoiding observation, and using deceptive techniques and procedures. The envelopment's probability of success also increases when the commander's forces have superior tactical mobility, possess air and information superiority, and his shaping operations fix the bulk of the enemy's forces in their current positions.

**4-33.** In planning for an envelopment, the commander wants to maneuver his enveloping force around or over the enemy's main defenses to secure objectives on the enemy's flank or rear. From those objectives the enveloping force can use its positional advantage to employ superior combat power against a defending enemy oriented in the wrong direction. Plans should ensure that the force conducting the envelopment remains within supporting distance of the fixing force. Sustainment of the enveloping force requires deliberate planning because only intermittent ground lines of communication between the sustainment area and the enveloping force may exist.

### Preparing for an Envelopment

**4-34.** All operations conducted in limited visibility or adverse weather requires more planning and preparation time than normal. The commander ensures that all night-vision and navigation systems required to maneuver under these conditions are functional. The commander rehearses these operations before execution to ensure complete integration and synchronization. Any problem areas require resolution before the operation begins.

**4-35.** Unit leaders and soldiers are briefed on their own, adjacent and higher echelon primary and alternate plans. This helps units or personnel moving into unexpected locations to direct their efforts toward accomplishing the mission. This exchange of information occurs in all operations.

**4-36.** The initial assault might take place without preparatory fires to achieve tactical surprise. However, fires are always planned in support of each unit's operations so that they are available if needed. Preparatory fires are normally high-volume fires delivered over a short period of time to maximize surprise and shock effect. They can continue while ground combat elements are maneuvering. This consideration applies to all operations.

### Execution of an Envelopment

**4-37.** Normally, the enemy's initial dispositions to meet an envelopment of his flank cannot be as strong as the forces defending his front; otherwise, he risks overextending

himself. The commander creates an assailable flank using whatever means necessary. The enveloping force then moves rapidly to exploit the situation. The force moves quickly because an enemy strengthens an assailable flank by preparing positions in depth and by holding mobile forces in reserve. When faced with the threat of envelopment, the enemy commander might move his reserves to meet the enveloping force. Thus, rapid movement around the enemy's flank is essential to prevent him from occupying previously prepared positions. Vigorous shaping operations aim to prevent him from reconstituting reserves from other portions of his front.

**4-38.** The enemy may attempt to cut off the attacking encircling force as well as extend his flank beyond the area that the encircling force is attempting to attack through. If the encircling force attempts to outflank such hostile extension, it may become overextended or lead to a dangerous separation of the enveloping force from the fixing force's operations. Therefore it is usually better for the encircling force to take advantage of the enemy's extension and subsequent weakness by penetrating a thinly held area of the enemy's front rather than overextending itself in an attempt to completely outflank the enemy's position.

**4-39.** The enemy may attempt a frontal (spoiling) attack in response to an attempted envelopment. In this case, the fixing force defends itself or engages in a delaying action while the enveloping force continues the envelopment or conducts a counterattack.

**4-40.** After the initial envelopment of one flank — which places the enemy at a disadvantage — the commander has many options. He may choose to establish favorable conditions for passing to a double envelopment by using reserves or exploit success by generating additional combat power along the same axis. Alternatively he can destroy or defeat the enveloped enemy force in place, or transition to another type of operation, such as exploitation or pursuit.

## TURNING MOVEMENT

**4-41. A turning movement is a form of offensive maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to pass around and avoid the enemy's main force, then secure an objective that causes the enemy to move out of its current positions or divert major forces to meet the threat.** A commander uses this form of offensive maneuver to seize vital areas in the enemy's rear before the main enemy force can withdraw or receive support or reinforcements. See Figure 4-16 for a graphic depiction of a turning movement. This form of offensive maneuver frequently transitions from the attack into an exploitation or pursuit. A turning movement differs from an envelopment because the force conducting a turning movement seeks to make the enemy displace

from his current locations, as compared with an envelopment that seeks to engage the enemy in his current location from an unexpected direction.

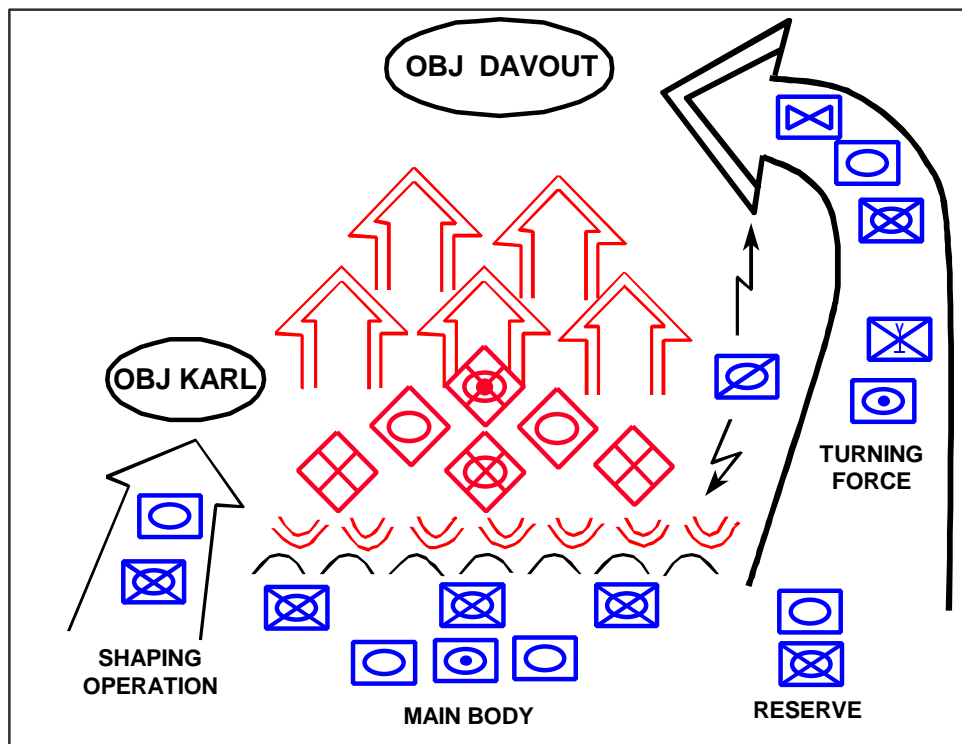


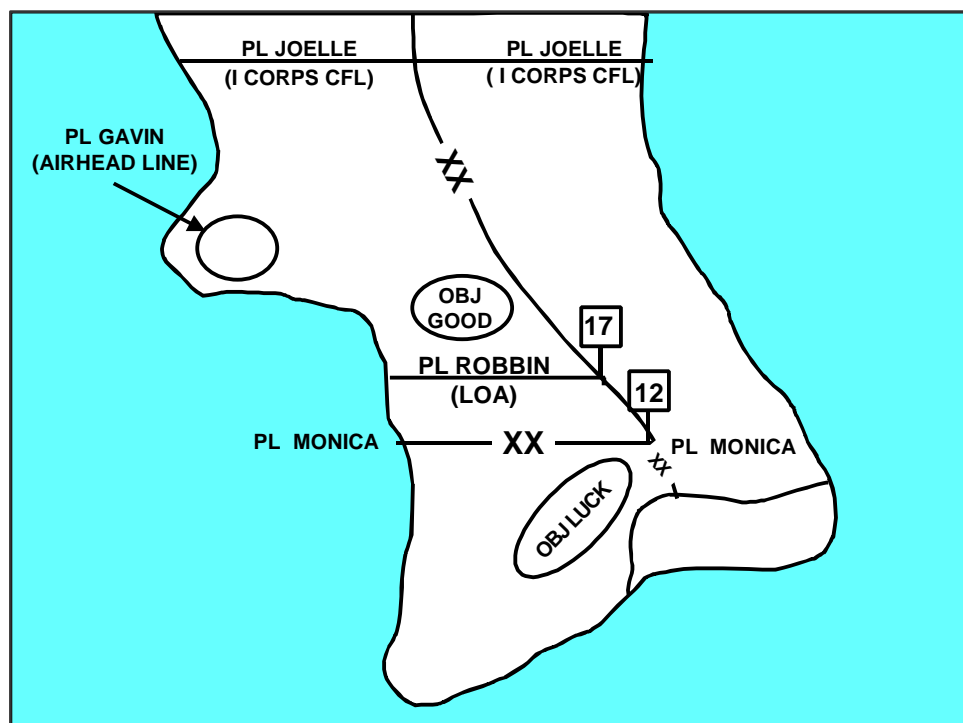
Figure 4-16. Turning Movement

#### Organization of Forces

**4-42.** The commander conducting a turning movement task organizes his resources into a turning force, a main body, and a reserve. Each of these forces conducts the functions of security, reconnaissance, and sustainment. A turning movement is particularly suited for conduct by division-size or larger forces possessing a high degree of tactical mobility. It is not until a commander has access to the resources of these echelons that he has the combat power to resource a turning force that can operate outside supporting range of his main body to allow the turning force to force enemy units out of their current positions. The exact tailoring of these forces is based on the factors of METT-TC and the commander's concept of operations for the turning movement.

**4-43.** The turning force normally conducts the decisive operation within a turning movement. A turning force normally conducts the majority of its operations outside of the supporting range of the main body and possibly outside its supporting distance. Thus the turning force contains sufficient combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities to operate independently of the main body for a specific period of time. The turning force can contain the majority of the commander's available combat power.

**4-44.** The commander organizes his main body to help establish the conditions necessary to ensure the success of the turning force, such as attacks designed to divert the enemy's attention away from the area where the turning force conducts its operations. The commander organizes his reserve to exploit the turning force's success.



**Figure 4-17. Example Control Measures for a Turning Movement**

#### Control Measures

**4-45.** The commander designates the area of operations (AOs) for each unit participating in the turning movement by establishing boundaries. He also designates additional control measures as necessary to synchronize the operations of his subordinates. These additional control measures include : phase lines (PLs), contact points, objectives, limit of advance, and appropriate fire coordination measures. Figure 4-17 depicts these control measures used to synchronize a turning movement that employs an airborne division as the turning force. (Appendix C discusses control measures associated with airborne and air assault operations.)

#### Planning for a Turning Movement

**4-46.** Selecting the geographic objective of the turning movement is of major importance to the success of the operation. The commander synchronizes the effects of each tactical task area with the other task areas. The commander's scheme of maneuver in a turning movement may vary depending on the specific situation and the factors of

METT-TC. In addition to normal offensive planning considerations addressed on pages 4-34 through 4-50, the commander conducting a turning movement pays special attention to planning branches and sequels to the turning movement including:

- Defensive actions by the turning force.
- Link-up operations between the turning force and the main body.
- Retrograde operations for the turning force.

**4-47.** After developing his tactical plan, the commander plans how the turning force will maneuver to its objective. The commander develops his movement, loading, and staging plans if outside transportation assets are required. He can plan to occupy key terrain that will threaten the enemy's survival or remain mobile and seek ways to exploit the turning force's success. The commander plans how the turning force can exploit success prior to initiating the operation.

**4-48.** In a turning movement that envisions an early linkup with the main body, the turning force normally plans to defend only that terrain required to protect itself. Once reinforcement or linkup with the main body occurs, the commander plans how to use the turning force to continue the attack or relieve it so it can prepare for subsequent missions.

**4-49.** The distances between forces and the existence of intermittent lines of communication magnify the problems inherent in providing CSS to a combat force during the conduct of a turning movement. Therefore in the planning of a turning movement, the commander must emphasize resupply, equipment maintenance, casualty evacuation, graves registration, and prisoner of war handling to deal with these increased problems adequately. Prepackaging company- and battalion-sized resupply sets can ease the execution of support operations during periods when CSS units must push supplies to the combat units.

**4-50.** Concurrent with tactical planning, planners must consider the provision of all supplies and equipment required for mission accomplishment. The commander plans and organizes his CSS operations to support a rapid tempo of highly mobile and widely dispersed operations. Traditional doctrinal support distances and responsibilities do not always apply to turning movements. Logistics planners recognize this and adjust their plans using available resources. Only supplies required to satisfy the force's immediate needs are carried into the operation. Excess supplies and equipment can burden the force. Staffs establish and maintain required supply levels in the objective area by phasing supplies into the objective area on an accompanying, follow-up (automatic and on-call), and routine basis. Medical evacuation, resupply, and reinforcement airlifts may be necessary to sustain the force's combat operations. Ammunition and POL products normally con-

stitute the major tonnage items. Lift restrictions affect what can be supplied using helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

### Executing a Turning Movement

**4-51.** The primary prerequisites of a successful turning movement are moving the turning force to the objective area without incurring unacceptable losses and providing the force with the required combat power, CS, and CSS. A commander can reduce his losses by operating under conditions of friendly air superiority, suppressing enemy fires, having a mobility advantage over the enemy, and through military deception and operations security.

**4-52.** Major sources of firepower to suppress enemy fires are fixed-wing aircraft, attack helicopters, and multiple rocket launchers that cover the entire route taken by the turning force. Other sources include naval surface fire support and cannon artillery units that accompany the striking force.

**4-53.** Trying to defend everything is not a viable tactic. The enemy's response to a turning movement cannot be as strong as the defense of his front. Whenever possible, the commander tries to reach the decisive location without encountering the enemy. Techniques to accomplish this include outflanking the enemy or using airborne, air assault, and amphibious means to avoid his prepared positions. Once friendly forces find a way deep into the enemy's sustainment area, the turning force moves rapidly to exploit the situation. It seeks to achieve its mission before the enemy can reposition his committed or uncommitted forces to react. Rapid movement is essential to prevent the enemy from occupying previously prepared positions in his rear. Vigorous shaping operations aim to prevent the enemy from reconstituting reserves from other portions of the enemy front.

**4-54.** The enemy may attempt to cut off and destroy the turning force before the main body is within supporting distance. Alternatively, he may try to withdraw to move his forces to a position where he can reestablish his lines of communications.

**4-55.** The enemy commander may conduct a frontal attack to try and prevent the successful completion of the turning movement. In this case, either the main body's security force or the main body conducts an area or mobile defense or engages in delaying actions while the turning force continues its mission.

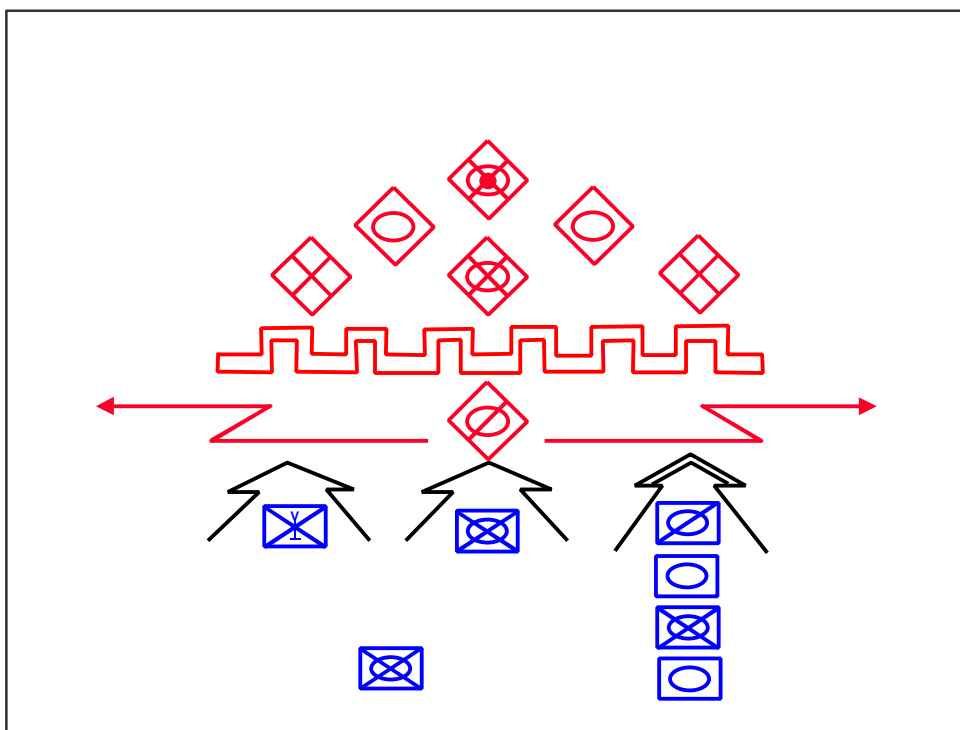
### FRONTAL ATTACK

**4-56. A frontal attack is a form of offensive maneuver used to rapidly overrun or destroy a weak enemy force or fix a significant portion of a larger enemy force in place over a broad front.** A commander commonly uses a frontal

attack as a shaping operation in conjunction with other forms of maneuver. A commander normally employs a frontal attack to:

- Clear enemy security forces.
- Overwhelm a shattered enemy during the conduct of an exploitation or pursuit.
- Fix enemy forces in place as part of a shaping operation.
- Conduct a reconnaissance in force.

Figure 4-18 depicts a frontal attack.



**Figure 4-18. Frontal Attack**

**4-57.** It is also necessary to conduct a frontal attack when assailable flanks do not exist. Where a penetration is a sharp attack designed to rupture the enemy position, the commander designs a frontal attack to maintain continuous pressure along the entire front until either a breach occurs or the attacking forces succeed in pushing the enemy back. Unless frontal attacks are conducted with overwhelming combat power, they are seldom decisive. Consequently, the commander's choice to conduct a frontal attack in situations where he does not have overwhelming combat power instead of another more decisive and less costly form of offensive maneuver is rarely justified unless the time gained is vital to the operation's success.



### Organization of Forces

**4-58.** There is no unique organization of forces associated with this form of maneuver. A commander conducting a frontal attack organizes his unit to conduct reconnaissance and security, main body, reserve, and sustainment functions. The factors of METT-TC dictate the specific task organization of the unit.

### Control Measures

**4-59.** A commander conducting a frontal attack may not require any additional control measures beyond those established to control the overall mission. This includes an area of operation, defined by unit boundaries, and an objective at a minimum. The commander can also use any other control measure that he feels is necessary to control the attack including:

- Attack positions.
- Line of departure.
- Phase lines.
- Assault positions.
- Limit of advance.
- Direction of attack or axis of advance for every maneuver unit.

A unit conducting a frontal attack normally has a wider area of operations than a unit conducting a penetration.

### Planning a Frontal Attack

**4-60.** It is seldom possible for a commander to exert sufficient pressure to overwhelm an enemy using a frontal attack since it strikes the enemy along a significant portion of his front. The force's primary objective is to maintain pressure and thus help fix the enemy force. The commander's planning effort should reflect these two considerations. When considering employing a frontal attack in a shaping operation, the commander should also consider other means for holding the enemy in position, such as feints and demonstrations employing indirect fires to preclude excessive losses.

### Execution of a Frontal Attack

**4-61.** The unit conducting a frontal attack advances on a broad front, normally with its subordinate ground maneuver elements abreast (except for the reserve). This clears the enemy's security area of his security forces and reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition assets while advancing the friendly force into the enemy's main defenses. Once contact with the enemy is made, the attacking force's subordinate elements rapidly develop the situation and report enemy dispositions immediately to the commander so he can exploit enemy weaknesses. The attacking force fixes enemy forces in their current locations and seeks to gain a position of advantage to destroy them using fire and movement.

**4-62.** If the unit conducting the frontal attack discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, the commander seeks to exploit that weakness and disrupts the integrity of the enemy's defense. The commander can employ his reserve to exploit the opportunity. He synchronizes the conduct of the exploitation with the actions of his other maneuver, CS, and CSS units to prevent counterattacking enemy forces from isolating and destroying successful subordinate elements of his force.

**4-63.** When the unit conducting the frontal attack can no longer advance, it adopts a defensive posture. It may be required to assist the forward passage of lines of other units. It continues to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks.

## PENETRATION

**4-64.** A penetration is a form of offensive maneuver used by a commander to breach an enemy's defenses on a narrow front to destroy the continuity of that defense so as to enable the enemy's subsequent isolation and defeat in detail by exploiting friendly forces. That penetration extends from the enemy's security area through his main defensive positions into his sustainment area. A commander employs a penetration when there is no assailable flank, enemy defenses are overextended and weak spots are detected in the enemy's positions, or time pressures do not permit the conduct of an envelopment.

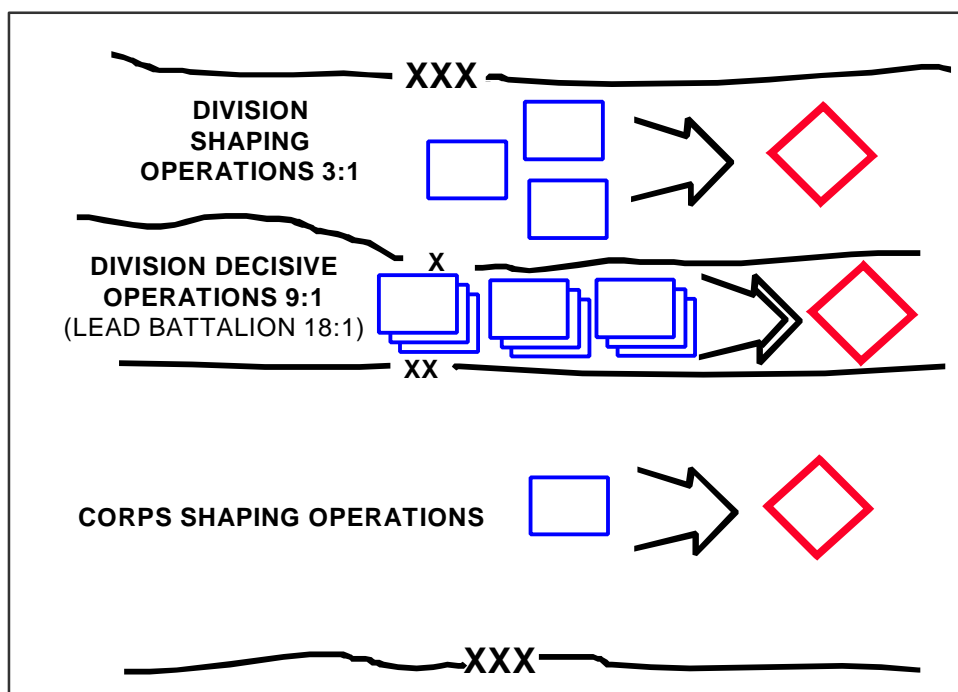


Figure 4-19. Penetration: Relative Combat Power

### Organization of Forces

**4-65.** The penetration of a well-organized position requires overwhelming combat power in the area of penetration and combat superiority to continue the momentum of the attack. (See Figure 4-19.) The commander designates a breach, support, and assault force. He can designate these elements for each defensive position that he is required to penetrate. He should not withhold combat power from the initial penetration to conduct additional penetration unless he has so much combat power that the success of the initial penetration is assured.

**4-66.** The commander resources a reserve to deal with expected or unexpected contingencies, such as an enemy counterattack, to avoid diverting the assault element from attacking the final objective of the penetration. He designates additional units follow and support or follow and assume missions to ensure rapid exploitation of initial success. He designates forces to fix enemy reserves in their current locations and isolate enemy forces within the area selected for penetration.

**4-67.** The commander's reconnaissance and intelligence assets determine as much as possible about the enemy's dispositions, capabilities, and intentions in the time allowed. His security forces prevent the enemy from discovering friendly dispositions, capabilities, and intentions, or interfering with the preparations for the attack. His sustainment forces provide necessary CSS to his combat forces.

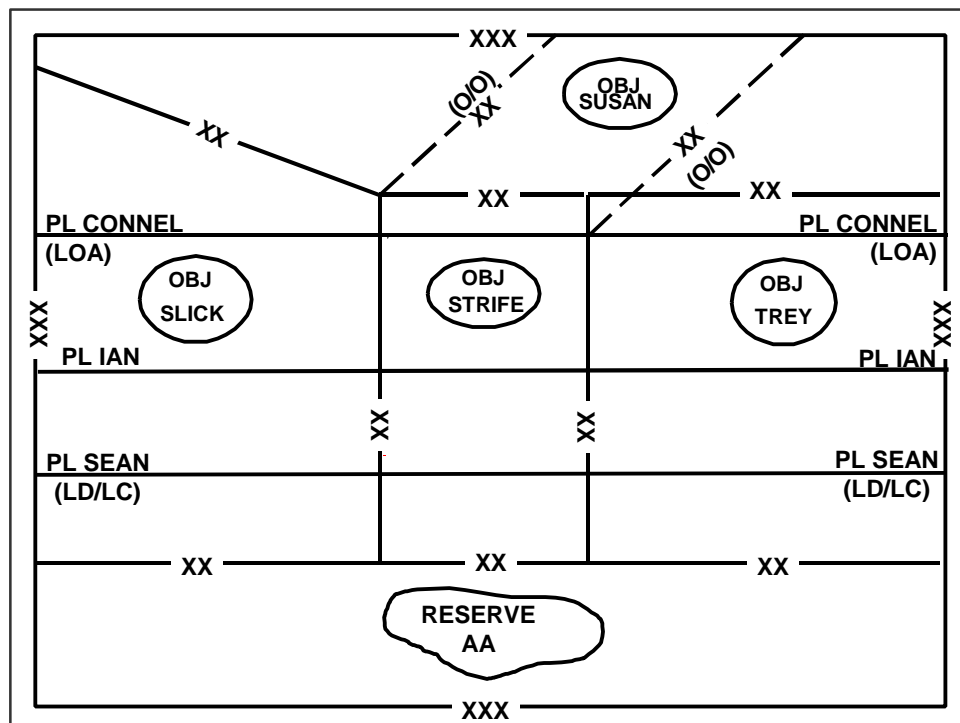


Figure 4-20. Penetration Graphic Control Measures

## Control Measures

**4-68.** A commander assigns, as a minimum, an area of operations (AO) to every maneuver unit, a line of departure or line of contact; time of the attack; phase lines; objective; and a limit of advance to control and synchronize the attack. (A commander can use a battle handover line instead of a limit of advance if he knows where he would like to commit a follow and assume force.) The lateral boundaries of the unit making the decisive operation are narrowly drawn to help establish the overwhelming combat power necessary at the area of penetration. The limit of advance must be located beyond the enemy's main defensive position to ensure completion of the breach. If the operation results in opportunities to exploit success and pursue a beaten enemy, the commander adjusts existing boundaries to accommodate the new situation. (See Figure 4-20.)

**4-69.** A commander uses the graphics associated with a breach site, such as gaps and lanes, on the small-scale maps used to control the maneuver of his forces at each point where he penetrates the enemy's defenses. Field Manual 90-13-1, *Combined Arms Breaching Operations*, defines the graphics.

**4-70.** Other control measures available to the commander include checkpoints, support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions, probable line of deployment, fire support coordination measures, attack position, assault position, and time of assault. Within the unit's area of operations, a commander can use either an axis of advance or a direction of attack to further control maneuver, if necessary.

## Planning for a Penetration

**4-71.** The success of the penetration depends primarily on a coordinated and synchronized plan — violently executed at a high tempo to achieve surprise — against comparatively weak enemy defenses. However, the terrain behind the area selected to penetrate must allow the penetration to proceed from the breach to a decisive objective.

**4-72.** The depth of the enemy position and the relative strength of attacking echelons determine the width of the penetration. The availability of artillery, air support, and other combat multipliers for the attacking force helps the commander determine relative combat power. A wider gap allows friendly forces to drive deeper, making it more difficult for the enemy to close the gap. The deeper the penetration, the easier it is for a unit to seize its objective and roll up the enemy's flanks created by the breach and the less likely it is that the enemy will be in a position to restore his front by falling back.

**4-73.** Plans for penetrating a defensive position include isolating, suppressing, and destroying by fire enemy forces in the area selected for the penetration. These plans should also address how to isolate the area of penetration from support or reinforcement by en-

emy forces located outside the area. This includes how to fix enemy reserves and long-range weapons in their current locations.

**4-74.** The commander plans to place the majority of his forces and assets in positions where the effects of their combat power can be felt in the area selected for penetration.

The commander's plan for the penetration normally has three phases:

- Breaching the enemy's main defensive positions.
- Widening the gap created to secure the flanks by enveloping one or both of the newly exposed flanks.
- Seizing the objective with its associated subsequent exploitation.

**4-75.** Planning the sequence of these phases depends on the specific situation. In some situations, if there are weaknesses or gaps in the enemy's front, it is possible for heavy forces to breach the enemy's defenses and proceed straight to the objective. Simultaneously light units could conduct local envelopment and exploitation operations. In other situations the commander uses his light forces to create the breach, holding his heavy forces initially in reserve to exploit gaps in the enemy's defenses created by light forces.

**4-76.** The commander plans shaping operations outside the area of penetration to contain the enemy on the flanks of the penetration and fix his reserves in their current locations. The commander usually attempts to penetrate the enemy's defensive positions along unit boundaries because defenses tend to be less effective along a boundary.

**4-77.** The commander plans for the penetration to break through the enemy's defenses so he is unable to reestablish his defense on more rearward positions. Until this event takes place, the commander does not want to divert the strength of his attacking units to widening the gap to secure the flanks of the penetration. However, he must develop plans that address contingencies, such as hostile counterattacks against the flanks of the penetration. The plan should provide assistance to attacking elements as they close with the enemy and support the attack until the enemy's power of resistance is broken.

### **Executing a Penetration**

**4-78.** After the initial breach of the enemy's main line of resistance, the sequence of the remaining two phases is determined by the factors of METT-TC. If the enemy is in a weak defensive position, it may be possible for the initial attacking force to seize the penetration's final objective while simultaneously widening the initial breach. In other situations, the commander must wait to seize the final objective until the breach is wide enough for other forces, such as reserves and follow and assume forces, to be committed. Commanders at all levels must take advantage of success within the commander's intent throughout the conduct of the penetration.

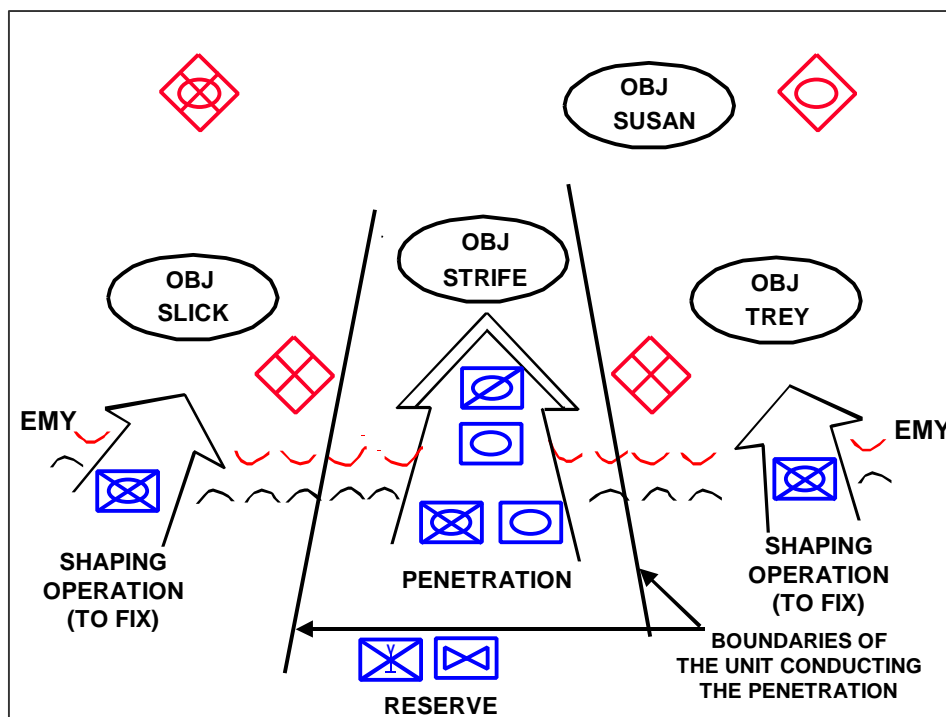


Figure 4-21. Penetration: the Breach

*Breaching the Enemy's Main Defensive Positions*

**4-79.** The commander launches the actual penetration on a relatively narrow front. (See Figure 4-21.) He narrows the area of operations of the unit or units conducting his decisive operation, the penetration, by adjusting unit lateral boundaries to the exact point or points where he wants to penetrate the enemy's defenses. This allows the force conducting the penetration to focus overwhelming combat power. The commander assigns his assault force a close-in objective. His support force locates where it can support by fire both the breach and the assault force. Local reserves are held in readiness to conduct a forward passage through or around units whose attacks have slowed or stopped.

**4-80.** Shaping operations on the remainder of the hostile front fix the enemy in his current positions and prevent him from disengaging to reinforce enemy units opposing the decisive operation. The commander tracks the battle's progress to ensure that his forces penetrate entirely through the enemy's main defensive positions and not just the enemy's security area.

**4-81.** The enemy normally tries to slow down or stop the conduct of the breach to gain time to react to the changing situation. Therefore, the attacking commander rapidly exploits and reinforces success. He piles on resources and additional units as necessary to ensure completion of the penetration through the enemy's defensive positions.

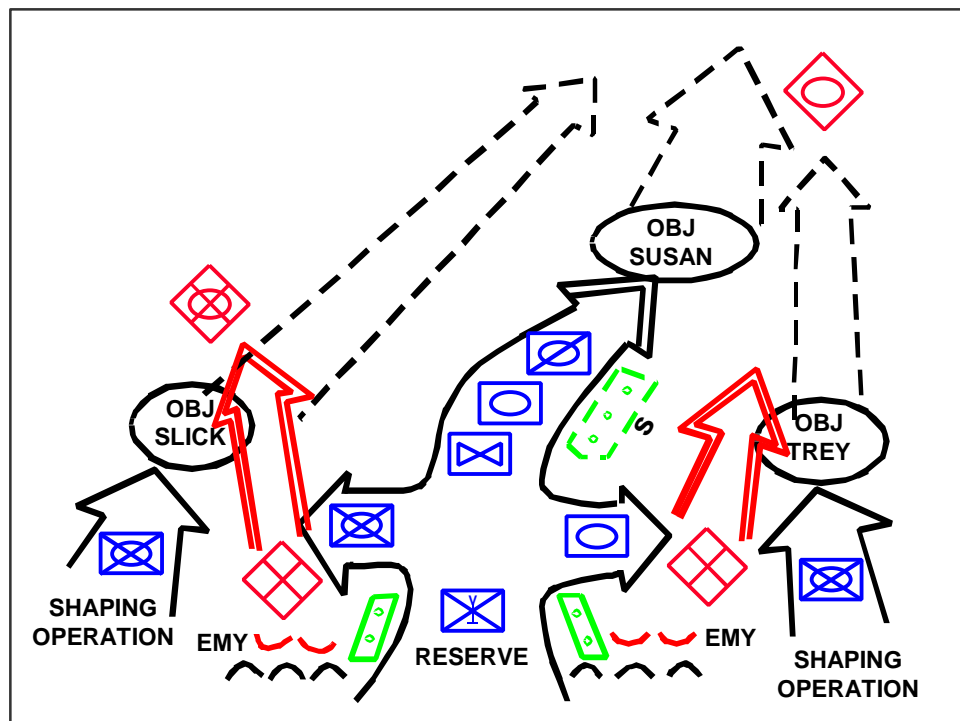


Figure 4-22. Expanding the Penetration

*Widening the Breach to Secure the Flanks*

**4-82.** Once the attacking force penetrates the main defenses, it begins to roll back the shoulders of the enemy's defensive positions by conducting a series of shallow envelopments to widen the gap. (See Figure 4-22.) The task of widening the initial gap of the penetration may be either a decisive or shaping operation, which can be assigned to the reserve as a planning priority. The commander makes plans to meet enemy counterattacks by shifting fires or committing the reserves or follow and assume forces. Units can use obstacles on the flanks of the penetration as a combat multiplier to assist in defeating any local enemy counterattack and to provide additional security for the force.

*Seizing the Objective and Subsequent Exploitation*

**4-83.** The mission of seizing the objective — which may be a specific enemy force — to destroy the continuity of the enemy's defensive position is normally the decisive operation after completing the penetration. Frequently that objective is located so far from the area of penetration that the unit or units initially conducting the penetration can not seize it without a phase. In that case, the commander plans to pass his reserve or follow and assume forces through the initial attacking force early, leaving exploitation beyond the objective to higher echelons. While the exact force mix is METT-TC-dependent, ar-

mored, mechanized, and aviation forces are generally useful in subsequent exploitation.

**4-84.** In large commands, forces may initiate an attack by simultaneously launching two or more convergent penetrations against weak localities on the hostile front. Often this method of attack helps isolate an extremely strong, hostile defense. The commander assigns shaping operations to initially contain any strong localities. When the multiple attacks have advanced sufficiently, the bypassed enemy forces are reduced and the penetrating attacks are united into a single decisive operation.

## INFILTRATION

**4-85.** An infiltration is a form of offensive maneuver used by a commander to conduct covert movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy's rear (or elsewhere) while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires. Infiltration is also a movement technique used within friendly territory to move forces in small groups at extended or irregular intervals. (See Chapter 14 for a discussion of infiltration as a movement technique.)

**4-86.** Infiltration occurs by land, water, air, or a combination of means. Moving and assembling forces covertly through enemy positions takes a considerable amount of time. To successfully infiltrate, the force must avoid detection and engagement. Since this requirement limits the size and strength of the infiltrating force and infiltrated forces alone can rarely defeat an enemy force; infiltration is normally used in conjunction with, and in support of, the other forms of offensive maneuver. Historically, the scope of the mission for the infiltrating force has been limited.

**4-87.** The commander orders an infiltration to move all or a portion of a unit through gaps in the enemy's defenses to —

- Reconnoiter known or templated enemy positions and conduct surveillance of NAIs and TAIs.
- Attack enemy-held positions from an unexpected direction.
- Occupy a support-by-fire position to support the decisive operation.
- Secure key terrain.
- Conduct ambushes and raids to destroy vital facilities and disrupt the enemy's defensive structure by attacking his reserves, artillery, air defenses, communication nodes, and logistic support.
- Conduct a covert breach of an obstacle or obstacle complex.

**4-88.** Special operations forces and light infantry units of up to brigade size are best suited to conduct an infiltration. In some circumstances, heavy forces operating in small units can conduct an infiltration. However, as the proliferation of technology leads to



increased situational understanding, this should increase the ability of heavy forces to avoid enemy contact and move undetected through the enemy's positions. In the future a commander may conduct an infiltration with heavy forces in coordination with precision fires as a prelude to an attack.

### **Organization of Forces**

**4-89.** Normally, to be successful, the infiltrating force must avoid detection at least until it reaches its objective rally point (ORP). Therefore, the size, strength, and composition of the infiltrating force is usually limited. The infiltrating unit commander organizes the unit's main body of the infiltrating unit into one or more infiltrating elements. The infiltration is conducted by the largest size element possible, compatible with the requirement for stealth and ease of movement. This increases the commander's control, speeds the execution of the infiltration, and provides responsive combat power. The exact size and number of each infiltrating element are situationally dependent.

**4-90.** The commander considers the following factors when determining how he will organize his forces. Smaller infiltrating elements are not as easy to detect and can get through small gaps in the defense. Even the detection of one or two small elements by the enemy will not prevent the unit from accomplishing its mission in most cases. Larger infiltrating elements are easier to detect and their discovery is more apt to endanger the success of the mission. Also, they require larger gaps to move through. A unit with many smaller infiltrating elements requires more time to complete the infiltration and needs more linkup points than a similar size unit with only a few infiltrating elements. Many infiltrating elements are also harder to control than fewer, larger elements.

**4-91.** The commander resources a security force that moves ahead of, to the flanks of, and to the rear of each infiltrating element's main body. These security forces can be given either a screen or a guard mission. (Chapter 13 discusses the planning, preparation, and execution of a screen and guard mission.) The sizes and orientations of security elements are also situationally dependent. Each infiltrating element is responsible for its own reconnaissance effort.

**4-92.** Sustaining an infiltrating force normally depends on a basic load of supplies, medical, and maintenance assets accompanying the force. After completion of the mission, the commander reopens LOCs for the conduct of normal sustainment activities.

### **Control Measures**

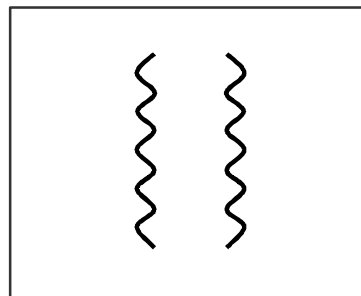
**4-93.** Control measures for an infiltration include, as a minimum:

- An AO for the infiltrating unit.
- One or more infiltration lanes.
- A line of departure or point of departure.
- Movement routes with their associated start and release points.
- Linkup or rally points [to include objective rally points ( ORPs)].
- Assault positions.
- One or more objectives.
- Limit of advance.

The commander can impose other measures to control the infiltration. These other measures include checkpoints, phase lines, and assault positions on the flank or rear of enemy positions. If it is not necessary for the entire infiltrating unit to reassemble to accomplish its mission, the objective may be broken into smaller objectives. Each infiltrating element would then move directly to its objective to conduct operations. (Most of these control measures have been previously described.) The use of an infiltration lane and linkup point are described below.

**4-94. An infiltration lane is a control measure that fixes fire planning responsibilities and coordinates forward and lateral movement of infiltrating units.**

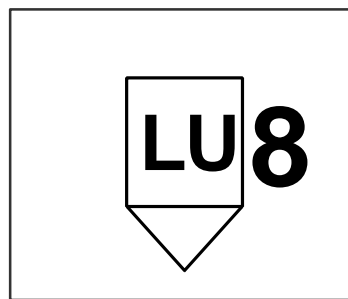
The commander selects infiltration lanes that avoid the enemy, provide cover and concealment, and facilitate navigation. Figure 4-23 depicts the graphic for an infiltration lane. Each unit assigned an infiltration lane picks its own routes within the lane and switches



**Figure 4-23. Infiltration Lane**

routes as necessary. The left and right limits of the infiltration lane act as lateral boundaries for the unit conducting the infiltration. Indirect fires or munition effects that impact the lane must be coordinated with the infiltrating unit. Units leaving their assigned lane run the risk of being hit by friendly fires. Company-sized units are normally assigned a single infiltration lane, although they can use more than one lane. Larger organizations, battalion and above, are always assigned more than one infiltration lane.

**4-95. A linkup point is an easily identifiable point on the ground where two infiltrating elements in the same or different infiltration lanes are scheduled to meet to consolidate**



**Figure 4-24. Linkup Point 8**

**before proceeding on with their missions.** A linkup point is normally positioned in the enemy's rear or along one of his flanks. It should be large enough for all infiltrating elements to assemble and should offer cover and concealment for these elements. The commander should position his linkup points on defensible terrain located away from normal enemy troop movement routes. Figure 4-24 depicts Linkup Point 8.

### Planning for an Infiltration

**4-96.** The activities and functions associated with the process of planning an infiltration are the same as with any other combat operation. The product of that planning process synchronizes the battlefield operating systems that support the infiltrating unit, taking advantage of that unit's stealth capabilities to surprise the enemy.

**4-97.** After identifying gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive positions, the commander assigns infiltration lanes, contact points, and objectives to subordinate units. Each subordinate unit commander picks one or more routes within his assigned lane and establishes additional contact points, rally points, assault points, and other control measures as required. The commander wants each of the routes within an infiltration lane to be far enough apart to prevent an infiltrating element on one route from seeing other infiltrating elements, but close enough so that an infiltrating element could switch quickly to another route if required by the situation. The commander wants each route to provide his infiltrating elements cover and concealment while avoiding known enemy and civilian locations and movement routes to the maximum extent possible. If possible, the subordinate unit commander selects his exact routes during the preparation phase after having the opportunity to reconnoiter each infiltration lane. He decides whether his unit will infiltrate as a unit, in smaller elements, or even as two-man buddy teams, depending on the density and strength of the enemy.

**4-98.** The commander may use single or multiple infiltration lanes depending on the size of the force to be infiltrated, amount of detailed information on enemy dispositions and terrain, time allowed, and number of lanes available. A single infiltration lane:

- Facilitates navigation, control, and reassembly.
- Requires the existence or creation of only one gap in the enemy's position.
- Reduces the area for which detailed intelligence is required.

**4-99.** Multiple infiltration lanes —

- Require the existence or creation of more gaps in the enemy's security zone.
- Reduce the possibility of compromising the entire force.
- Increase difficulty with maintaining control.

**4-100.** The sizes and numbers of infiltrating elements are major considerations for the commander when he is deciding whether to use a single lane or multiple infiltration lanes. If the infiltration takes place using multiple elements, contingency plans must address the following situations:

- A lead element, possibly the advance guard, makes contact, but the trail elements have not started infiltrating.
- A lead element infiltrates successfully, but compromises one or more trailing elements.
- A compromised linkup point.

**4-101.** The commander uses available technology to assist in planning the infiltration and avoiding unintended enemy contact during the infiltration. An accurate depiction of enemy systems and locations, tied to rapid terrain analysis, can graphically depict dead spots in the enemy's battlefield surveillance. The commander can then plan how to expand those existing dead spots into infiltration lanes through a precision attack of selected enemy elements and systems.

**4-102.** The plan also addresses the following considerations:

- Availability of fire support throughout the operation, both during infiltration and the attack on the objective.
- Linkup or extraction of the infiltrating unit after mission completion.
- Sustainment of the infiltrating force during the operation, to include casualty evacuation.
- Deception operations, such as actions by other units designed to divert enemy attention from the area selected for the infiltration.
- Linkup of the various infiltrating elements.
- Command and control, to include recognition signals.
- Positioning of combat vehicles to support the infiltrating elements.
- Use of limited visibility and rough terrain to mask movement and reduce the chance of detection.
- Infiltration of the largest elements possible to maintain control.
- Rehearsals.
- Specially required preparations, such as modifying the unit's SOP regarding the soldier's combat load for the mission. When infiltrating on foot, units carry only required equipment. For example, in close terrain and in the absence of an armor threat, heavy antiarmor missile systems may be a liability.
- Abort criteria.
- Critical Friendly Zones (CFZs). **A CFZ is an area covered by target acquisition radars tied into fire support systems that results in a priority counterfire mission targeted against all enemy fire support systems targeting the protected area.**

**4-103.** Planned recognition signals and linkup procedures for the infiltration should be simple and quick. If there has not been any firing or any other noises, signals should not violate noise and light discipline. However, if there have already been assaults, a r-

tillery, and small arms fire, signals, such as whistles and flares, can be used as linkup aids. A lack of time and the short distance involved in many infiltration operations may make the conduct of formal linkup procedures unnecessary.

### **Preparing for an Infiltration**

**4-104.** Once the commander selects the objective, infiltration lanes, and linkup or rally points, he directs reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence operations to update and confirm the details on which he bases his plan. He then revises the plan to reflect current conditions within the AO.

### **Executing an Infiltration**

**4-105.** Moving undetected during an infiltration requires a considerable amount of time. The infiltrating unit moves from its assembly area or current position through the start point and then continues moving along the infiltration route to a release point. If buddy teams or small elements are conducting the infiltration, the unit uses a series of linkup points to reassemble into a coherent unit. Units can use a variety of navigation aids such as GPS (global positioning system) to remain within the planned infiltration lane, which minimizes their chances of detection by the enemy. At the same time, they report their progress and status through user transparent systems.

**4-106.** If the complete unit is conducting the infiltration, the forward security force begins its movement first, followed by the main body. The distance between the forward security force and the main body depends on the factors of METT-TC. The advance guard must be far enough ahead of the main body so that it can either deploy or move to another route if the forward security force discovers the enemy. The forward security force in an infiltration must have enough time to move in a stealthy and secure manner. Enemy units should not be able to move undetected in the gap between the forward security force and the main body.

**4-107.** As the infiltrating unit moves, the advance guard reports to the commander regarding the cover and concealment of each route, enemy activity, location of danger areas and link-up points, enemy activity on the objective, and other combat information. The unit attempts to avoid enemy contact; however, contact with the enemy does not always mean the mission is compromised. The infiltrating unit engages targets first with indirect fire to avoid revealing its presence and exact location. If necessary, the forward security force conducts actions on contact while the main body moves to another route, reconstitutes a forward security force, and continues the mission. If the main body makes contact unexpectedly, it either overruns the enemy force, if the enemy has little

combat power, or bypasses him and continues the mission. During the infiltration, the unit ignores ineffective enemy fire and continues to move. The commander may use suppressive fires against the enemy to cover the sounds of the infiltration or to divert the enemy's attention to areas other than where the infiltration lanes are located.

**4-108.** The infiltrating unit's elements move to an assembly area or an ORP to consolidate its combat power, refine the plan, and conduct any last minute coordination prior to continuing the mission. The unit then conducts those tasks needed to accomplish its assigned mission, which could be an attack, raid, ambush, seizure of key terrain, capture of prisoners, or the collection of specific combat information.

**4-109.** A commander may need to abort an infiltration operation if the factors of METT-TC change so drastically during the conduct of an infiltration that the infiltrating force is no longer capable of accomplishing its mission. Examples of changes that might trigger such an action include:

- Significant portions of the infiltrating force's combat power are lost through navigation errors, enemy action, accidents, or maintenance failures.
- Movement or significant reinforcement of a force-oriented objective.
- Detection of the infiltration by the enemy.
- Changes in the tactical situation that make the mission no longer appropriate, such as the initiation of an enemy attack.

The criteria for aborting the operation are developed in the planning process. The decision to abort the infiltration is transmitted to all appropriate headquarters for their action and information.

## COMMON OFFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

**4-110.** Commanders at all echelons aggressively use initiative to take advantage of opportunities and momentum to achieve assigned missions while rapidly defeating the enemy during the execution of offensive operations. Friendly combat forces move rapidly behind the reconnaissance effort to overrun weakly held enemy positions in accordance with previously developed plans, branches, and sequels. Commanders shift their efforts quickly to reinforce success, while seeking out way to isolate strongly held enemy positions for later destruction while carrying the battle deep into the enemy's sustainment area.

**4-111.** Such battlefield victory against a well-trained and well-equipped enemy hinges on the commander's synchronization of all his forces, since weapons and units are more effective when they operate collectively as a combined arms team. While the activities of different units' may be separated in time and space, they are properly synchronized if

their combined effects are felt at the decisive times and places. The following discussion applies to all types and forms of offensive actions using the battlefield operating systems defined in Chapter 3. These BOS are the means by which a commander synchronizes his operations throughout the planning, preparation, and execution cycle.

## CONDUCT MANEUVER

**4-112.** The commander conducts maneuver to avoid enemy strengths and create opportunities to increase the effects of friendly fire. The attacker seeks to overwhelm the enemy with one or more unexpected blows before the enemy has time to react in an organized fashion. This occurs when he is able to engage the defending enemy force from positions that place the attacking force in a position of advantage with respect to the defending enemy force, such as engaging the enemy from a flanking position. Finally, the attacker maneuvers to close with and destroy the enemy by close combat and shock action.

**4-113.** A commander can overwhelm an enemy by the early seizure and retention of key and decisive terrain that provide dominating observation, cover and concealment, and better fields of fire to facilitate the maneuver of his forces. If decisive terrain is present, the commander designates it to communicate its importance in his concept of operations, first to his staff and later to subordinate commanders. The friendly force must control decisive terrain to successfully accomplish its mission.

**4-114.** A commander finds Army aviation units useful in all types of offensive operations because of their speed, mobility, and versatility. They can perform the following tasks in support of offensive operations:

- Conducting operations designed to attrit, disrupt, delay, and fix the enemy through the AO.
- Deploying into locations where a commander does not wish to irrevocably commit ground forces; for example, forward of obstacles that have not been breached.
- Responding to enemy movements before the arrival of ground maneuver forces.
- Facilitating the disengagement of ground forces.

**4-115.** The commander plans how and where his forces conduct breaching operations. He plans his breaching operations using a reverse planning sequence from the objective back to the assembly area. Breaching operations are addressed in more detail in FM 90-13-1, *Combined Arms Breach Operations*.

## Combat Formations

**4-116. A combat formation is an ordered arrangement of troops and vehicles for a specific purpose and describe the general configuration of a unit on the ground.** A commander can use six different combat formations depending on the factors of METT-TC:

- Column,
- Line.
- Box.
- Diamond.
- Wedge.
- Vee.

Terrain characteristics and visibility determine the actual arrangement and location of the unit's personnel, vehicles, and subordinate units within a given formation.

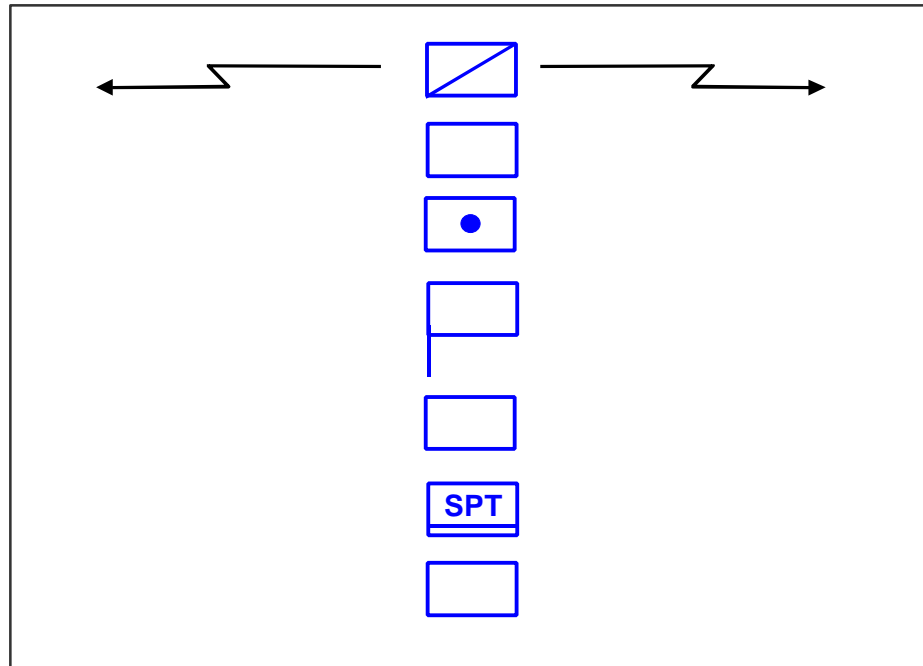
**4-117.** Combat formations allow a unit to move on the battlefield in a posture suited to the senior commander's intent and mission. A unit may employ a series of combat formations during the course of an attack; each has its advantages and disadvantages. Subordinate units within a combat formation can also employ their own combat formations consistent with their particular situation. The commander considers the advantages and disadvantages of each formation in the areas of C<sup>2</sup> maintenance, fire-power orientation, ability to mass fires, and flexibility when determining the appropriate formation for a given situation. All combat formations use one or all of the three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. (Chapter 14 describes these three movement techniques.)

**4-118.** The commander's use of standard formations allows him to rapidly shift his unit from one formation to another, giving him additional flexibility when adjusting to changes in the factors of METT-TC. (This results from a commander rehearsing his unit so that it can change formations through the use of standard responses to changing situations, such as actions on contact.) By designating the combat formation he plans to use, the commander:

- Establishes the relationship between units on the ground.
- Indicates where the enemy should make contact with the formation and how he plans to react to that contact.
- Indicates the level of security desired.
- Establishes the orientation for the preponderance of his weapon systems.

The principal differences between each combat formation are the number of subordinate maneuver units required to assume the formation and the geographical relationship of the subordinate maneuver units to each other and to support elements.





**Figure 4-25. Column Formation**

#### *Column Formation*

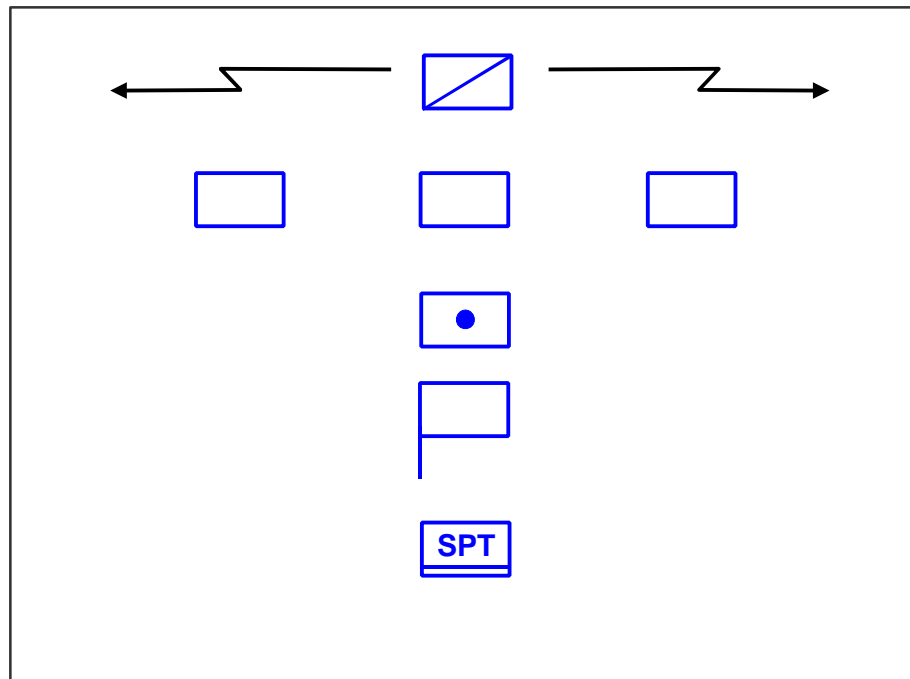
**4-119.** The unit moves in column formation when the commander does not anticipate early contact, the objective is distant, and speed and control are critical. (See Figure 4-25.) Normally, the lead element uses a traveling overwatch technique while the following units are in traveling formation. The advantages of employing a column formation:

- Provides the best formation to move large forces quickly, especially with limited routes and limited visibility.
- Makes enemy contact with a small part of the total force while facilitating control and allowing the commander to quickly generate mass.
- Provides a base for easy transition to other formations.
- Works in restricted terrain.

**4-120.** A disadvantage of using the column formation is the majority of the column's firepower can only be immediately applied on the column's flanks. Additionally, there are the possibilities of inadvertently bypassing enemy units or positions and exposing the units flanks or running head on into an enemy deployed perpendicular to the column's direction of movement.

#### *Line Formation*

**4-121.** In a line formation the unit's subordinate ground maneuver elements move abreast of each other. (See Figure 4-26.) A commander employs this formation when



**Figure 4-26. Line Formation**

he assaults an objective because it concentrates firepower to the front in the direction of movement. The other advantages of employing a line formation:

- Facilitates the use of speed and shock in closing with an enemy.
- Allows the coverage of wide frontages.
- Facilitates the occupation of attack-by-fire or support-by-fire positions.

**4-122.** The disadvantages of using a line formation:

- Provides less flexibility of maneuver than other formations since it does not distribute units in depth.
- Linear deployment allows a unit deployed on line to bring only limited firepower to bear on either flank.
- Provides limited or no reserve.
- Limits overwatch forces.
- Limits control of a unit using a line formation in restricted terrain or under conditions of limited visibility.

*Echelon Formation*

**4-123.** A commander who has knowledge of potential enemy locations can use an echelon formation to deploy his subordinate ground maneuver units diagonally left or right. (See Figures 4-27 and 4-28.) It is commonly used by units operating on the flank of a larger formation. The advantages of using an echelon formation:

- Allows the concentration of the unit's firepower forward and to the flank in the direction of echelon.

- Allows forces not in contact to maneuver against a known enemy, because all elements probably will not come into contact at the same time.
- Facilitates control in open terrain.

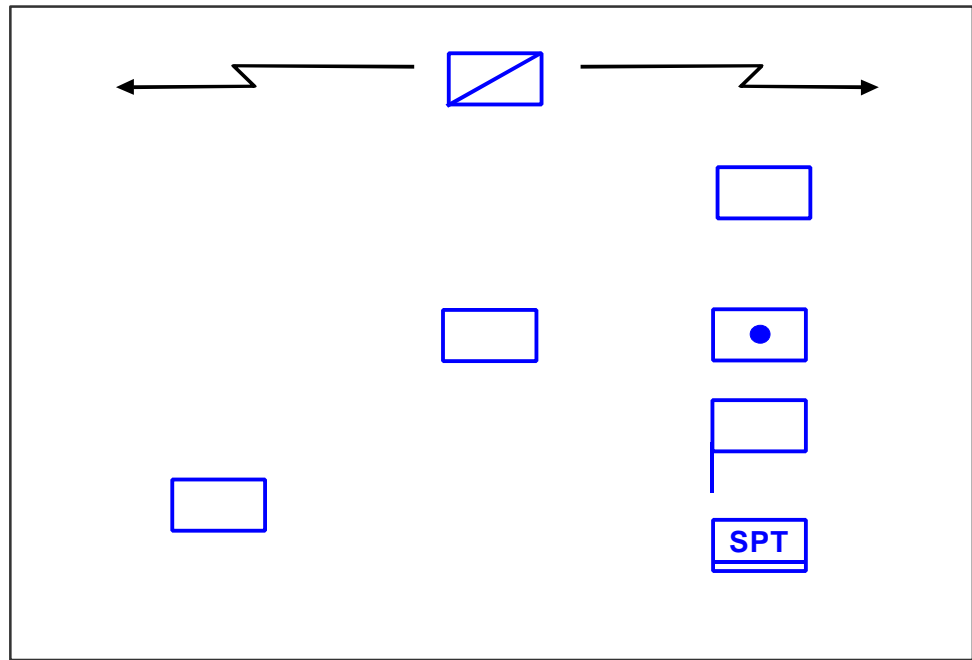


Figure 4-27. Echelon Left Formation

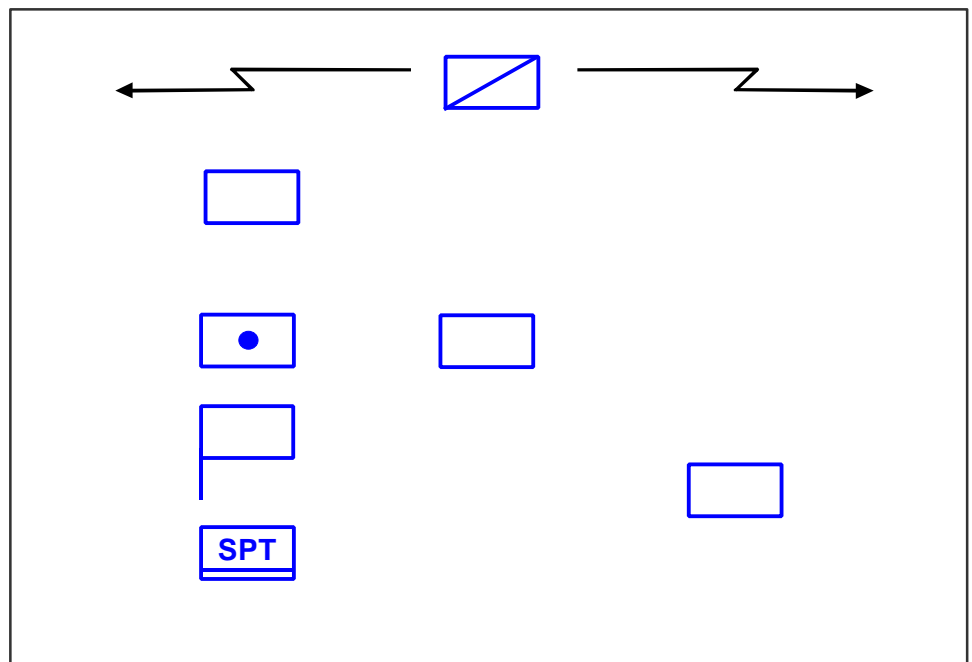
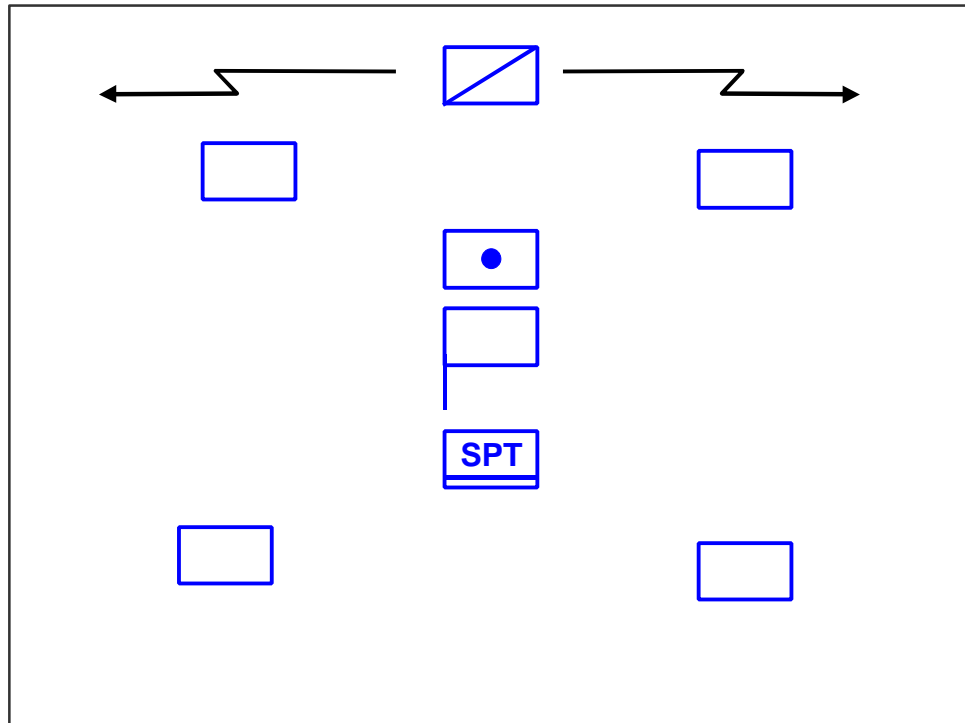


Figure 4-28. Echelon Right Formation

**4-124.** The primary disadvantages of the echelon formation are that it is more difficult to maintain control over the unit in restricted terrain than a column formation and the lack of security or firepower available on the opposite side of the echelon.



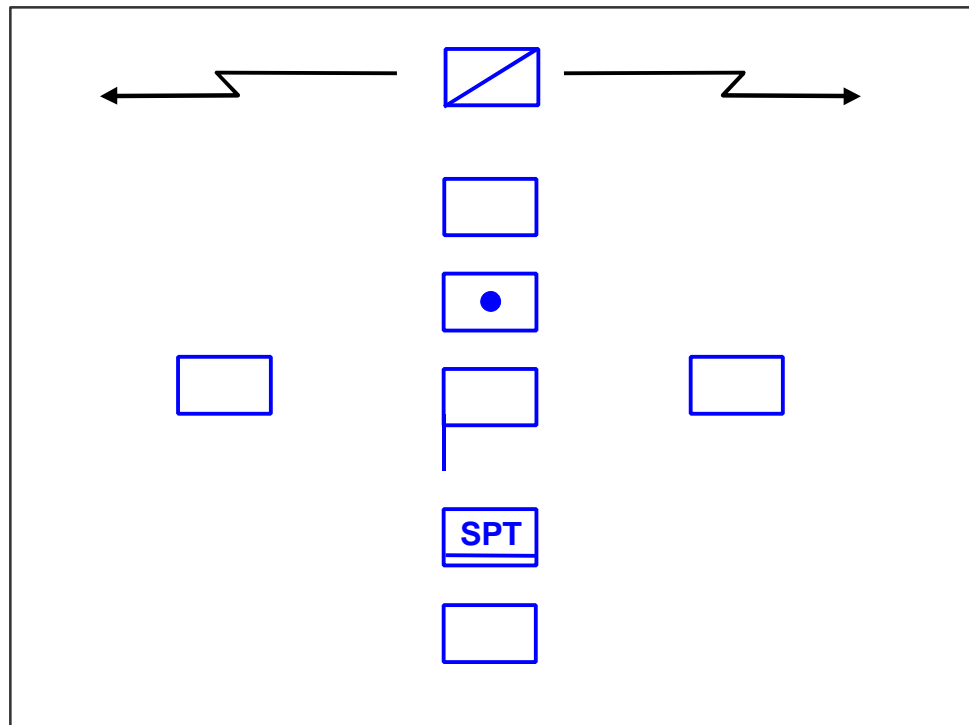
**Figure 4-29. Box Formation**

#### *Box Formation*

**4-125.** The box formation arranges the unit with two forward and two trail maneuver elements. (See Figure 4-29.) The box formation cannot be adopted by a unit with only three maneuver elements. The subordinate elements of the box usually move in a column formation with flank security. It is often used during the execution of an approach march, an exploitation, or a pursuit when only general knowledge about the enemy is known. The advantages of employing a box formation:

- Allows the unit to change quickly and easily to any other formation.
- Facilitates rapid movement, yet still provides all-around security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Maintains control more easily when compared to a line formation.

**4-126.** The primary disadvantages of a box formation are that it requires sufficient maneuver space for dispersion and the availability of multiple routes.



**Figure 4-30. Diamond Formation**

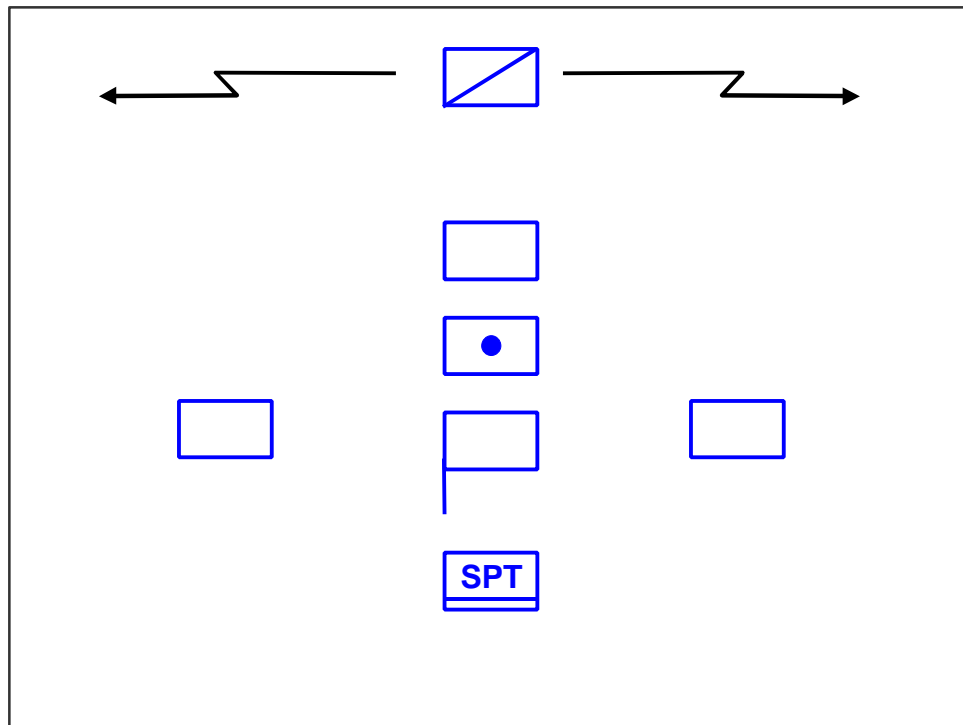
#### *Diamond Formation*

**4-127.** The diamond formation arranges the unit with one forward and one trail unit and a unit on each flank. (See Figure 4-30.) The subordinate elements of the diamond usually move in a column formation with flank security. It is most effective during the conduct of approach marches, exploitations, or pursuits when only general knowledge about the enemy is known. The advantages of employing a diamond formation:

- Allows the commander to maneuver either left or right immediately without first repositioning regardless of which subordinate element makes contact with the enemy. (This is the chief advantage of and the difference between a diamond and a box formation.)
- Facilitates making enemy contact with the smallest possible force, yet provides all-around security.
- Provides firepower to the front and flanks.
- Changes easily and quickly to another formation.
- Facilitates speed of movement while remaining easy to control.
- Provides an uncommitted force for use as a reserve.

**4-128.** The primary disadvantages of this formation:

- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Requires four subordinate maneuver elements.
- Requires the availability of multiple routes.



**Figure 4-31. Wedge Formation**

#### *Wedge Formation*

**4-129.** The wedge formation disposes forces to attack an enemy appearing to the front and flanks. (See Figure 4-31.) A unit with only three subordinate maneuver elements can adopt the wedge formation. The commander uses the wedge when contact with the enemy is possible or expected, but his location and dispositions are vague. It is the preferred formation for a movement to contact in an organization with three subordinate maneuver units because it initiates contact with one unit while retaining two other subordinate uncommitted units positioned to maneuver and further develop the situation. Within the wedge, subordinate units employ the formation best suited to the terrain, visibility, and likelihood of contact. The advantages of employing a wedge formation:

- Provides maximum firepower forward and allows a large portion of the unit's firepower to be used on the flanks.
- Allows rapid crossing of open terrain when enemy contact is not expected.
- Facilitates control.
- Allows for rapid changes in the orientation of the force.
- Facilitates the rapid change to a line, vee, echelon, or column formation.

**4-130.** The primary disadvantages to the wedge formation:

- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.
- Requires the availability of multiple routes.
- Lacks ease of control in restricted terrain or poor visibility.

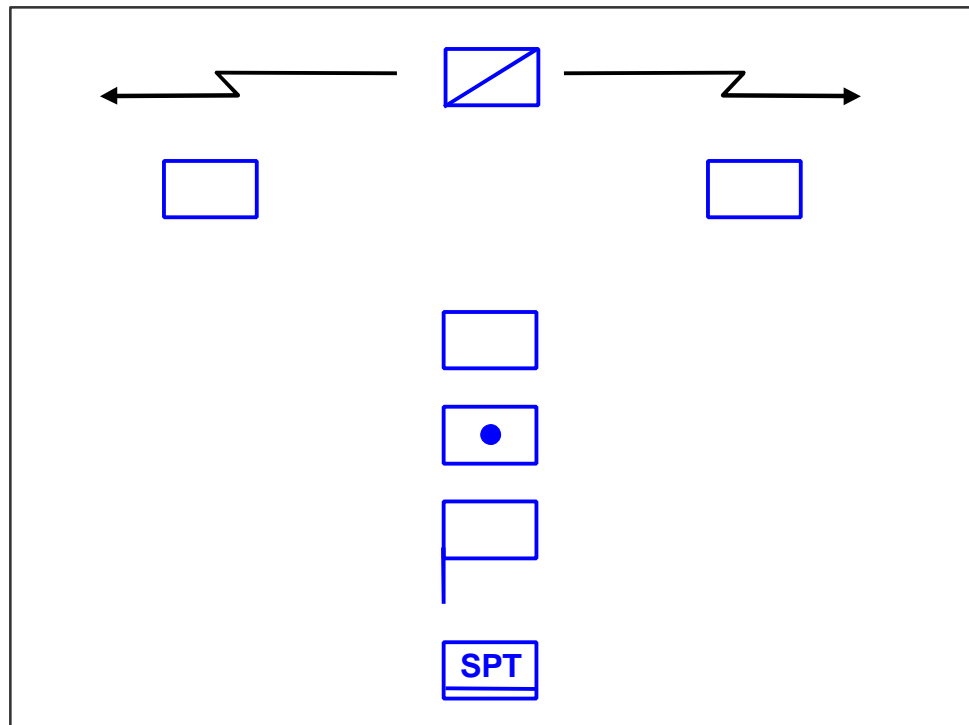


Figure 4-32. Vee Formation

*Vee Formation*

**4-131.** The vee formation disposes the unit with two maneuver elements abreast and one or more units trailing. (See Figure 4-32.) This arrangement is well-suited for an advance against a known threat to the front. It may be used when enemy contact is expected and the location and disposition of the enemy is known. The advantages of employing a vee formation:

- Provides for maximum firepower forward and good firepower to the flanks, but the firepower on the flanks is less than that provided by the wedge.
- Facilitates a continued maneuver after contact is made and a rapid transition to the assault.
- Allows the unit to change quickly to a line, wedge, or column formation.

**4-132.** The primary disadvantages to this formation:

- Makes reorientation of the direction of movement, such as a 90 degree turn, more difficult than that experienced using a wedge.
- Makes control in restricted terrain and under limited-visibility conditions difficult.
- Requires sufficient space for dispersion laterally and in depth.

**Limited-visibility Conditions**

**4-133.** The capability to fight at night and under limited-visibility conditions is an important aspect of conducting maneuver. A commander conducts offensive operations at

night or under limited-visibility conditions when a daylight operation continues into the night or when an operation could result in heavy losses if conducted in daylight. Offensive operations conducted in these conditions can achieve surprise, gain terrain required for further operations, and negate enemy visual target acquisition capabilities while taking advantage of the friendly force's night-fighting capabilities.

**4-134.** Night operations degrade the capabilities of soldiers and units. Cognitive abilities degrade more rapidly than physical strength and endurance. Night-vision devices degrade the user's depth perception. This degradation in performance occurs after as little as 18 hours of sustained work. The plan should allow time for both soldiers and units to recuperate after they conduct a night attack before being committed to other operations. The weight that soldiers must carry also directly affects their endurance. The commander carefully determines the fighting load of his soldiers, taking into account the factors of METT-TC. The commander generally limits the fighting load of his soldiers conducting night operations to less than one-third their body weight.

#### DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE

**4-135.** A commander uses the products of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process to identify any aspect within his area of operations or area of interest that will affect how he accomplishes his mission. This includes probable enemy locations, various approaches to those positions, and other information, such as cross-country mobility and refugee flow. He studies his enemy's tactics and his specific opposing force's vulnerabilities to his weapon systems and planned offensive operations.

**4-136.** The commander uses his reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence assets to study the terrain and confirm or deny the enemy's strengths, dispositions, and likely intentions, especially where and in what strength the enemy will defend. By studying the terrain, the commander tries to determine the principal heavy and light avenues of approach to his objective. He also tries to determine the most advantageous area for the enemy's main defense to occupy, routes that the enemy may use to conduct counterattacks, and other factors, such as observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, key terrain, avenues of approach (OCOKA). It is unlikely that the commander has complete knowledge of the enemy's intentions; therefore, he must conduct intelligence collection activities continuously during the battle.

**4-137.** The commander prepares a collection plan that organizes his intelligence assets to address his information requirements and provide targeting information for high-



value and high-priority targets. A commander's information requirements commonly includes:

- Locations, composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the defending enemy force.
- Locations of possible enemy assembly areas.
- Location of enemy indirect fire weapon systems and units.
- Location of gaps and assailable flanks.
- Location of areas for friendly and enemy air assaults.
- Location of enemy air defense gun and missile units.
- Location of enemy electronic warfare units.
- Effects of weather and terrain on current and projected operations.
- Withdrawal routes for enemy forces.
- Anticipated timetable schedule for the enemy's most likely course of action.
- Locations of enemy command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C<sup>4</sup>ISR) systems and linkages.

If friendly reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence systems cannot answer the commander's information requirements, he can commit additional resources or decide to execute his offensive operation with the current information.

## EMPLOY FIREPOWER

**4-138.** Fire superiority must be gained and maintained throughout all offensive actions. Fire support enables maneuver by the use of a variety of methods and assets that attrit, delay, and disrupt enemy forces. The use of preparatory, counterfire, suppression, destruction, neutralization, obscurity, precision munitions and non-lethal fires provide the commander with numerous options for gaining and maintaining fire superiority. The commander uses his long-range artillery systems and air support to engage the enemy throughout the depth of his positions.

**4-139.** Along with the reserve, attacks by indirect fire systems and close air support are one of the commander's principle means for influencing ongoing actions. Such support helps to establish the conditions required for successful mission accomplishment and is key to the commander's ability to react to unexpected situations. Decentralized execution, with most of the firepower assigned to decisive operations, characterizes the employment of fires during the conduct of offensive operations. Subordinates must have direct access to sufficient firepower to adequately support their maneuvering elements. Simultaneously, the commander retains control over sufficient fire support assets to enable him to mass their effects at critical times and places in support of his decisive operations or react to enemy counteraction.

**4-140.** Fire support planning is the continuing process of analyzing, allocating, and scheduling fires. It determines how fires will be used, what types of targets to attack,

what collection assets are used to acquire and track those targets, what assets are used to attack the target, and what assets verify effects on the target. This planning does not stop at the objective or limit of advance. The commander gives attention to flanks and potential enemy hide positions. Coordination among echelon fire support elements and the proper use of fire support coordination measures are critical to prevent fratricide.

**4-141.** The fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) integrates fire support into the unit's maneuver scheme for the commander. The FSCOORD supports the unit's maneuver by planning preparatory fires, harassing fires, interdiction fires, suppressive fires, and deception fires. These fires can be time- or event-driven. The FSCOORD plans fires on known and likely enemy positions, which may include templated enemy positions. If time permits, fire planning reconciles top-down planning and bottom-up refinement.

**4-142.** As the attacking force moves forward, preparatory fires sequentially suppress or destroy enemy positions. The commander must weigh its probable effects against achieving a greater degree of surprise against the enemy, especially under conditions of limited visibility, in determining whether to fire an artillery preparation. He may decide to employ smart or brilliant munitions to destroy select high-priority targets or use these munitions in mass against part of the enemy defense to facilitate a breach and negate the requirement for long duration preparation fires using conventional munitions.

**4-143.** Responsive indirect fires normally occur as a result of positioning indirect firing assets well forward and to the flanks of the advancing maneuver forces. The commander considers the effect that movement by echelon or battery has on the amount of fire support provided. Only essential targets are planned. The commander should support his unit's decisive operation with priority of fires. He places coordinated fire lines (CFLs) well forward of friendly maneuver forces and plans on-order CFLs on phase lines so that they can be quickly shifted as the force moves.

**4-144.** Responsive fires are also provided by effective assignment of forward observers and target acquisition assets to quick fire or exclusive nets. Quick fire nets allow the lead observers to associate directly with specific field artillery or mortar fire units. These kinds of communication arrangements enhance fire support responsiveness through streamlined net structures and focused priorities.

**4-145.** Offensive information operations perform several functions to support the offense. As the friendly force moves through the enemy's security area and closes into his main defensive positions, jamming resources concentrate on neutralizing enemy fire control, target acquisition, and intelligence-gathering systems. In addition, electronic

warfare resources continue to provide intelligence and guidance to both friendly ja mers and lethal indirect fire weapon systems so attacking units can destroy enemy C<sup>4</sup>ISR, fire support, and other high-value targets.

## PERFORM LOGISTICS AND CSS

**4-146.** The objective of CSS in offensive operations is to assist the tactical commander in maintaining the momentum created through offensive action. The commander wants to take advantage of windows of opportunity and launch offensive actions with min i-mum advance warning time. Therefore, logistics and personnel planners and operators must anticipate these events and maintain the flexibility to support the offensive plan accordingly. A key to successful offensive operations is the ability to anticipate the fo r-ward push of support, specifically in regard to ammunition, fuel, and water. Combat service support commanders must act rather than react to support requir ements.

**4-147.** Combat service support maintains momentum of the attack by delivering su p-plies as far forward as possible. The commander can use throughput distribution and preplanned and preconfigured push packages of essential items to help maintain his momentum and operational tempo.

**4-148.** CSS units and material remain close to the maneuver force to ensure short turnaround time for supplies and services. This includes uploading as much critical material — such as Class III and Class V — as possible and coordinating to preclude attempted occupation of a piece of terrain by more than one unit. The commander makes a decision regarding the possibility that CSS preparation for the attack will be detected by the enemy and give away the commander's tactical plans.

**4-149.** The availability of adequate supplies and transportation to sustain the operation becomes more critical as it progresses. Supply lines of communication are strained, and requirements for repair and replacement of weapons systems mount. Equipment, esp e-cially weapons systems, must be repaired forward to maintain momentum. Requirements for petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) increase because of the distance the combat vehicles of the maneuver force are likely to travel. CSS units in direct su p-port of maneuver units must be as mobile as the forces they support. One way to provide continuous support is to attach elements of CSS units or complete CSS units to their supported maneuver formations as required by the factors of METT-TC.

**4-150.** Aerial resupply and establishment of forward logistical bases may be necessary to sustain maneuver operations such as exploitation and pursuit conducted at great di s-tance from the units sustainment base. The unit or support activity at the airlift's point

of origin is responsible for obtaining the required packing, shipping, and sling-load equipment. It prepares the load for aerial transport, prepares the pickup zone, and conducts air-loading operations. The unit located at the airlift destination is responsible for preparing the landing zone to accommodate aerial resupply and for receiving the load.

**4-151.** Raids conducted by ground maneuver forces within the depths of the enemy's sustainment area tend to be audacious, high-speed, and of short duration. Logistics support is minimal; units carry as much Class III and V as possible, taking advantage of any captured enemy supplies. Once the raiding force crosses its line of departure (LD), only limited, emergency aerial resupply of critical supplies and medical evacuation are feasible because of the absence of a secure line of communications. The commander must thoroughly plan for aerial resupply of the raiding force since it entails greater risk than normal operations. Under these conditions, units destroy damaged equipment that is unable to maintain the pace of the operation.

#### EXERCISE COMMAND AND CONTROL

**4-152.** The commander's mission and intent determines the scheme of maneuver and the allocation of available resources. The commander reduces the scope of the initial mission if only a few resources are available. For example, a commander could tell his subordinates to clear their areas of operation of all enemy platoon-size and larger forces instead of clearing their areas of operation of all enemy forces if he lacks the time or forces needed to accomplish the later task.

**4-153.** All planning for offensive actions address:

- Enemy positions, strengths, and capabilities.
- Missions and objectives for each subordinate element, to include intelligence, ground maneuver, aviation, fire support, air defense, engineer, signal, and CSS.
- Commander's intent.
- Areas of operations for the use of each subordinate element with associated control graphics.
- Time the operation is to begin.
- Scheme of maneuver.
- Special tasks required to accomplish the mission.

The commander and his staff translate the unit's assigned mission into specific objectives for subordinates. These objectives can involve any type or form of operations. If the type of operation assigned has associated forms, the commander may specify which form to use, but should minimize restrictions on his subordinates' freedom of action. Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Operations and Organization*, addresses the military decision-making process and the format for plans and orders.

**4-154.** Prior planning and preparations that result in the synchronization of the six BOS increase a unit's effectiveness when executing operations. However, the fluid nature of combat requires the commander to guide the actions of his subordinates during the execution phase. The commander locates himself where he can best sense the flow of the operation and influences its critical points by redirecting the effects of committed forces or employing his reserve. This usually means that he is well-forward in the combat formation. Once contact is made with the enemy, he quickly moves to the area of contact, sizes up the situation, and acts aggressively.

**4-155.** In addition to assigning objectives, commanders at all echelons consider how to exploit advantages that arise during the conduct of operations and the seizure of intermediate and final objectives. The commander exploits success by aggressively executing the plan, taking advantage of junior leader initiative, and employing trained units capable of rapidly executing standard drills. His reserve also provides a flexible capability to exploit unforeseen advantages.

**4-156.** The commander always seeks to surprise his opponent throughout the plan, prepare, and execute cycle. Information operations, such as deception, and the choice of an unexpected direction or time for the conduct of an offensive operation can result in the enemy being surprised. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses the enemy C<sup>2</sup>, induces psychological shock, and reduces the coherence of his defenses. Tactical surprise is more difficult to achieve once hostilities begin, but it is still possible. The commander achieves tactical surprise by attacking in bad weather and over seemingly impossible terrain, conducting feints and demonstrations, making rapid changes in tempo, and employing sound operations security measures.

**4-157.** The commander should anticipate any requirements to shift his decisive operations during the conduct of the offensive action to press the fight and keep the enemy off balance. The commander develops decision points to support these changes. The commander uses both human and technical means to validate his decision points.

**4-158.** The commander retains the capability to rapidly concentrate force effects, such as fires, throughout the extent of his area of operations during the conduct of offensive operations. This capability is also critical to the commander when his force crosses linear obstacles. Lanes and gaps resulting from combined arms breaching operations or occurring naturally typically are choke points. There is a tendency for each subordinate element to move out independently as it completes its passage through the choke point.

This independent movement detracts from the ability of the whole force to rapidly generate combat power on the far side of an obstacle.

**4-159.** The commander plans how to expand his communications coverage to accommodate increased distances as his force advances. The commander provides for redundant communication means including wire, radio, visible and ultraviolet light, heat, smoke, audible sound, messengers, and event-oriented communications, such as the casualty-producing device that initiates an ambush.

## PROTECT THE FORCE

**4-160.** The commander protects his force to deny the enemy the capability to interfere with ongoing operations and meets his legal and morale obligations to his soldiers. To protect his forces the commander:

- Maintains a high tempo of operations.
- Conducts area security operations.
- Employs operations security (OPSEC) procedures.
- Executes deception operations.
- Conducts defensive information operations.
- Employs camouflage, cover, and concealment.
- Conducts active and passive air defense operations.
- Constructs survivability positions for nondisplacing systems and supplies.
- Conducts defensive nuclear, biological, and chemical operations.

Although this list is not all-inclusive, it typifies the measures a commander takes to secure his force during offensive operations.

**4-161.** The echelon's OPSEC program and any deception or survivability efforts should conceal from the enemy or mislead him regarding the location of the friendly objective, decisive operation, the disposition of forces, and the timing of the offensive operation. This tends to prevent the enemy from launching effective spoiling attacks.

**4-162.** The IPB process contributes to this battlefield operating system by developing products that help the commander protect his forces including intervisibility overlays and situational templates. Intervisibility overlays help protect the force. If an enemy cannot observe the friendly force, he cannot engage the friendly force with direct fire weapons. Situational templates also help protect the force. If a commander knows how fast an enemy force can respond to his offensive actions, he can sequence his operations at times and places where the enemy can respond least effectively. This occurs through the determination of enemy artillery range fans, movement times between enemy reserve's assembly area locations and advancing friendly forces, and other related intelligence items.

## TRANSITION OPERATIONS

**4-163.** A transition operation occurs when the commander must change his focus from one type of military action to another. The following paragraphs explain why a commander primarily conducting offensive actions would transition to the defense and describe techniques that a commander can use to ease the transition.

**4-164.** Once begun, a commander halts an offensive action only when it results in complete victory and the end of hostilities, reaches a culminating point, or the commander receives a change in mission from his higher commander. This change in mission may be a result of the interrelationship of the other elements of national power, such as a political decision.

**4-165.** All offensive actions that do not achieve complete victory will reach a culminating point when the balance of strength shifts from the attacking force to its opponent for many reasons. Usually, offensive actions lose momentum when friendly forces encounter heavily defended areas that cannot be bypassed. They also reach a culminating point when the resupply of fuel, ammunition, and other supplies fail to keep up with expenditures, soldiers become physically exhausted, casualties and equipment losses mount, and repairs and replacements do not keep pace. Because of enemy surprise movements, offensive actions also stall when reserves are not available to continue the advance, the defender receives reinforcements, or he counterattacks with fresh troops. Several of these causes may combine to halt an offense. In some cases, the unit can regain its momentum, but this only happens after difficult fighting or after an operational pause.

**4-166.** If the attacker cannot anticipate securing decisive objectives before his force reaches its culminating point, he plans a pause to replenish his combat power and phases his operation accordingly. Simultaneously, he prevents the enemy from knowing when the friendly forces become overextended.

**4-167.** Once offensive operations begin, the attacking commander tries to sense when he reaches or is about to reach his culminating point. Before reaching this point, he must transition to some other type of action. The commander has more freedom to choose where and when he wants to halt the attack if he can sense that his forces are approaching culmination. He can plan his future activities to aid the defense, minimize vulnerability to attack, and facilitate renewal of the offense. For example, to prevent overburdening the extended lines of communications resulting from the advances away

from his sustainment base, some of the commander's subordinate units may move into assembly areas before he terminates the offense to start preparing for the ensuing defensive operation.

**4-168.** A commander anticipating the termination of his offensive action prepares orders that include the time or circumstances under which the offense will transition to another type of operation, such as the defense, the missions and locations of subordinate units, and command and control measures. As he transition from the offense to the defense, a commander takes the following actions:

- Establishes a security area and local security measures.
- Redeploys fire support assets to ensure the support of security forces.
- Maintains contact and surveillance of the enemy using a combination of reconnaissance units and surveillance assets to develop the information required to plan future actions.
- Redeploys forces based on probable future employment.
- Maintains or regains contact with adjacent units in a contiguous AO and ensures that his units remain capable of mutual support in a noncontiguous AO.
- Transitions the engineer effort by shifting the emphasis from mobility to countermobility and survivability.
- Explains the rationale for transitioning from the offense to his soldiers.

**4-169.** The commander redeploys his air defense assets to cover the force's defensive position. A transition to the defense may require the commander to change his air defense priorities. For example, his top priority may have been coverage of maneuver units in the offense. This may shift to coverage of his long-range sensors and weapons in the defense.

**4-170.** The commander conducts any required reorganization and resupply concurrently with the above activities. This requires a transition in the logistics effort, with a shift in emphasis from ensuring the force's ability to move forward (POL and forward repair of maintenance and combat losses) to ensuring the force's ability to defend in its chosen location (forward stockage of Class IV and V).

**4-171.** The commander should not wait too long to transition from the offense to the defense as his forces approach their culminating point. Transitioning to defensive actions after reaching a culminating point without prior planning is extremely difficult for several reasons. Defensive preparations are hasty, and forces are not adequately disposed for defense. Defensive reorganization requires more time than the enemy probably allows. Usually, attacking forces are dispersed, extended in depth, and weakened in condition. Moreover, the shift to defense requires a psychological adjustment.



Soldiers who have become accustomed to advancing must now halt and fight defensively — sometimes desperately — on new and often unfavorable terms.

**4-172.** A commander can use two basic techniques when he transitions to the defense. The first technique is for the leading elements to commit forces and push forward to claim enough ground to establish a security area anchored on defensible terrain. The main force moves forward or rearward as necessary to occupy key terrain and institutes a hasty defense that progresses into a deliberate defense as time and resources allow. The second technique is to establish a security area generally along the unit's final positions, moving the main body rearward to defensible terrain. The security force thins out and the remaining force deploys to organize the defense. In both methods, the security area should be deep enough to keep the main force out of the range of enemy medium artillery and rocket systems.

**4-173.** In the first technique, the security area often lacks depth because the force lacks sufficient combat power to seize required terrain. In the second technique, the enemy force will probably accurately template the forward trace of friendly units and engage with artillery and other fire support systems. These actions often result in the loss of additional friendly personnel and equipment and the expenditure of more resources.

**4-174.** If a commander determines that it is necessary to break off an offensive operation and conduct a retrograde, he typically has his units conduct an area defense from their current locations until he can synchronize the retrograde operation. The amount of effort expended in establishing the area defense depends on the specific factors of METT-TC currently prevailing.

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*"When armies approach each other, it makes all the difference which owns only the ground on which it stands or sleeps and which one owns all the rest."*

**Winston Churchill: *Their Finest Hour*, 1949**

## CHAPTER 5 MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

**Movement to contact is a type of offensive action designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact.** A commander conducts this type of offensive action when the tactical situation is not clear or when the enemy has broken contact. A properly executed movement to contact develops the combat situation and maintains the commander's freedom of action after contact is gained. This flexibility is essential in maintaining the initiative. All of the tactical concepts, control measures, and planning considerations introduced in Chapters 3 and 4 apply to the conduct of a movement to contact.

**5-2.** Rapid and aggressive movement, decentralized control, and the hasty deployment of combined arms

formations from the march to attack or defend characterize the movement to contact.

The fundamentals of a movement to contact are:

- Focus all efforts on finding the enemy.
- Make initial contact with the smallest force possible, consistent with protecting the force.
- Make initial contact with small, mobile, self-contained forces to avoid decisive engagement of the main body on ground chosen by the enemy. This allows the commander maximum flexibility to develop the situation.
- Task-organize the force and use movement formations to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.
- Keep forces within supporting distances to facilitate a flexible response.
- Maintain contact regardless of the course of action adopted once contact is gained.

Close air support, air interdiction, and counterair operations are essential to the success of large-scale movements to contact. Local air superiority or, as a minimum, air parity is vital to the success of the operation.

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1           **5-3. A meeting engagement is a combat action that occurs when a mov-**  
2           **ing force that is not completely deployed for battle collides with and**  
3           **engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place.** The conduct of a move-  
4           ment to contact will result in a meeting engagement. The enemy force may be either  
5           stationary or moving. Such encounters often occur in small-unit operations and when  
6           reconnaissance has been ineffective. The force that reacts first to the unexpected contact  
7           generally gains an advantage over its opponent. However, a meeting engagement may  
8           also occur when the opponents are aware of each other and both decide to attack without  
9           delay to obtain a tactical advantage or seize key or decisive terrain. A meeting engag e-  
10          ment may also occur when one force attempts to deploy into a hasty defense while the  
11          other force attacks before its opponent can organize an effective defense. Technical i n-  
12          telligence systems may discover the enemy before the security force can gain contact.  
13          No matter how contact is made, seizure of the initiative is the overriding imperative.  
14          Prompt execution of battle drills at platoon level and below, and standard actions on  
15          contact for larger units, can give that in itiative to the friendly force.

### HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

#### The Soviet Manchuria Campaign, August 1945

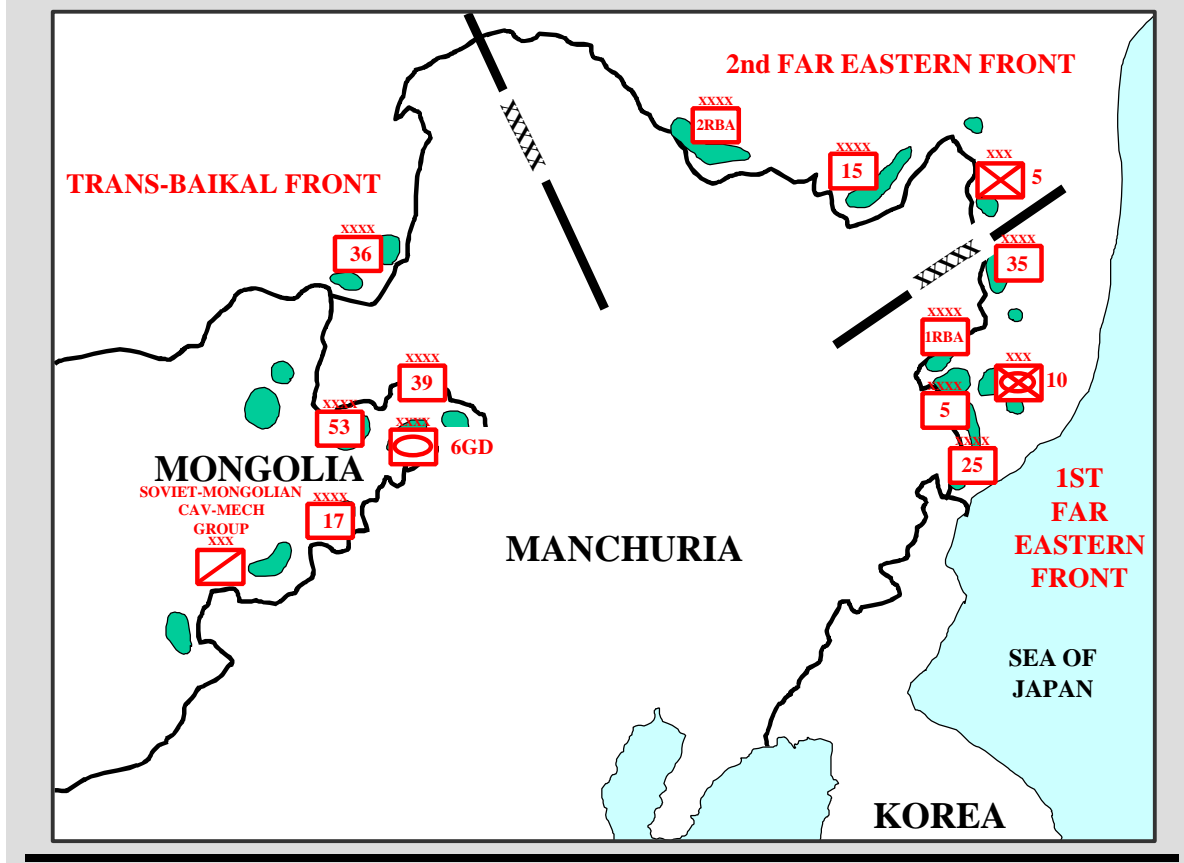
Shortly after midnight on 9 August 1945, Soviet assault troops crossed the Soviet-Manchurian border and attacked Japanese positions. This was the vanguard of a force of more than 1.5 million men that was to advance along multiple axes on a frontage of more than 4,400 kilometers. Soviet offensive tactics were shaped by several factors:

- The necessity for speed to increase the effectiveness of maneuver, thus increasing surprise, overcoming initial defenses, and preempting the establishment of subsequent effective d efenses.
- The vast expanse of the AO.
- The diversity of the terrain, giving rise to large-scale force tailoring.
- The nature of the opposition.

The Soviets conducted their movement to contact operation at the last possible moment. This rei n- forced strategic surprise and yielded tactical surprise as well. Units deployed for attack from assembly areas 20 to 80 kilometers behind the border and entered from the march, attacking along every possible axis using small, task-organized assault groups with heavy engineer and firepower support. Conduct of operations under adverse weather conditions and at night went contrary to Japanese expectations. The Soviet tendency to bypass fortified positions confused Japanese commanders.

The Soviets carefully timed the application of their offensive power by first attacking with forward detachments and advanced guards in the first echelon, and then with the main force. This perpetuated the momentum of initial assaults and created a momentum that was imparted to army and front-level oper a- tions. Often enemy resistance was eliminated before the main columns had to deploy. Forces massed at the critical point on each axis and maneuvered over what was considered to be impassable terrain. All this resulted in a loss of defense coherence that the defending Japanese *Kwantung* Army was never able to

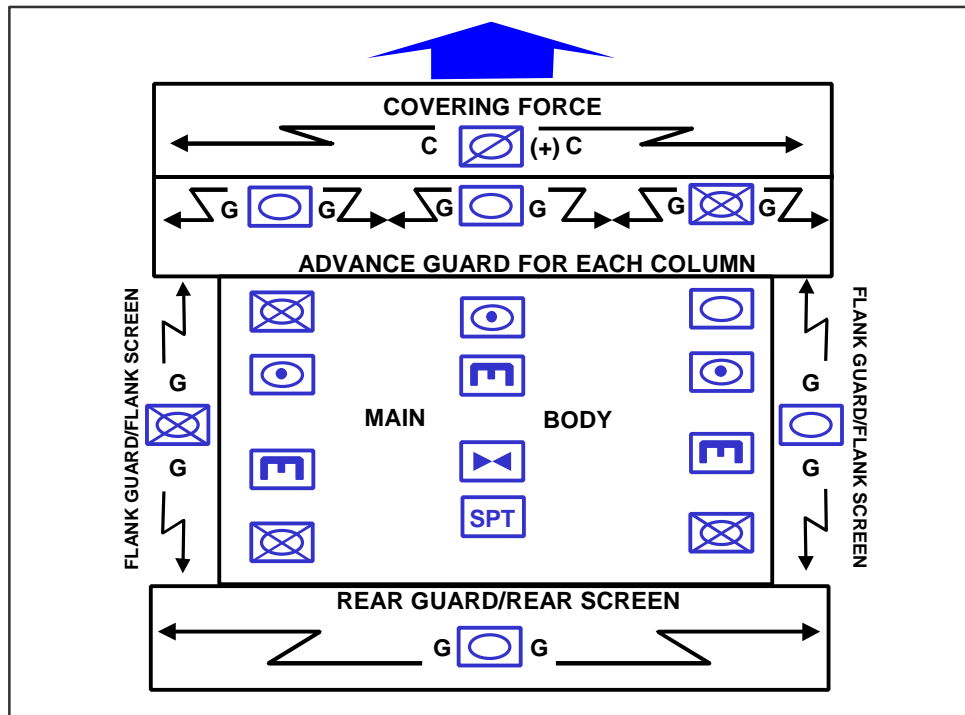
regain. In seven days Soviet forces penetrated between 500 and 950 kilometers into Manchuria from their starting points, securing all the objectives necessary for a complete victory over the Japanese.



## 1 ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**5-4.** A movement to contact is organized with an offensive covering force or an advance guard as a forward security element and a main body as a minimum. A portion of the main body will comprise the commander's sustaining base. Based on the factors of METT-TC, the commander may increase his security forces by having an offensive covering force and an advance guard for each column, as well as flank and rear security (normally a screen or guard). (See Figure 5-1.)

**5-5.** The assignment of a movement to contact mission requires the commander not to have contact with the enemy main body. However, the commander may still know the location of at least some enemy reserve and follow-on forces. If the corps or division commander has enough intelligence information to target enemy uncommitted forces, reserves, or enemy sustainment operations activities, he will normally designate forces, such as long-range artillery systems and attack helicopters, to engage known enemy



**Figure 5-1. Example of a Force Organized for a Movement to Contact**

elements regardless of their geographical location within his area of operations. At all times the forward security element, the main body, and those elements conducting sustainment operations perform reconnaissance.

#### **SECURITY FORCES**

**5-6.** A corps or division commander conducting a movement to contact typically organizes his security element into a covering force to protect the main body's movement and to develop the situation before committing the main body. A covering force is task-organized to accomplish specific tasks independent of the main body in accordance with the factors of METT-TC, such as conduct mobility and breach operations. This covering force reports directly to the establishing commander.

**5-7.** If a force conducting a movement to contact is unable to resource a covering force for independent security operations, it may use an advance guard in the place of a covering force. An advance guard is a task-organized combined arms unit or detachment that precedes a column formation to protect the main body from ground observation or surprise by the enemy. This typically occurs when a brigade or battalion conducts a movement to contact. In cases where the higher echelon (corps or division) creates a covering force, subordinate elements can establish an advance guard behind the covering

ing force and ahead of the main body. This normally occurs when subordinate units are advancing in multiple parallel columns. In this case, each of the main body's columns usually organizes its own advance guard.

**5-8.** The advance guard operates forward of the main body to ensure its uninterrupted advance by reducing obstacles to create passage lanes, repairing roads and bridges, or locating bypasses. The advance guard also protects the main body from surprise attack and fixes the enemy to protect the deployment of the main body when it is committed to action. The elements comprising the advance guard should have equal or preferably superior mobility to that of the main body. For this reason, mechanized infantry, cavalry, and armored units are most suitable for use in an advance guard. Engineer mobility assets should also constitute a portion of the advance guard, but other support can normally be provided by the main body.

**5-9.** The advance guard moves as fast as possible, but, unlike the covering force, remains within supporting range of the main body's weapon systems. It pushes back or destroys small enemy groups before they can hinder the advance of the main body. When the advance guard encounters large enemy forces or heavily defended areas, it takes prompt and aggressive action to develop the situation and, within its capability, defeat the enemy. Its commander reports the location, strength, disposition, and composition of the enemy and tries to find the enemy's flanks and gaps in his position. The main body may then join the attack. The force commander usually specifies how far in front of his force the advance guard is to operate. He reduces those distances in close terrain and under low-visibility conditions.

**5-10.** When the command's flanks or rear are not protected by adjacent or following units, it must provide its own flank and rear security. The command can accomplish this by establishing a screen or a guard on its flanks or to its rear. The main body's flank columns normally provide these flank security elements; for example, the left flank brigade would provide the left flank screen for a division movement to contact. The rear guard normally comes from one of the subordinate elements of the corps or division and reports directly to the corps or division headquarters. A corps may conduct a flank cover if there is a clearly identified, significant threat from the flank. A flank cover requires significant resources that are unavailable to the main body. Aviation units or intelligence systems may establish a flank screen if the factors of METT-TC allow; however, this increases the risk to the main body. While aviation units can use their combat power to delay enemy forces, intelligence systems can only provide early warning, they

cannot trade space for time to “buy” time for the main body to react. For more specific information concerning reconnaissance operations see FM 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance*. See Chapter 13 for more detailed information concerning security operations.

## MAIN BODY

**5-11.** The main body consists of forces not detailed to security duties. The combat elements of the main body prepare to respond to enemy contact with the unit's security forces. Attack helicopter units will normally remain under division and corps control until contact is made. If the situation allows, the commander can assign to his subordinate units a follow and support mission to prevent his security forces from being diverted from their primary mission.

**5-12.** The commander designates a portion of the main body for use as his reserve, which normally encompasses approximately one-fourth to one-third of the main body's combat power. The reserve normally constitutes approximately one-fourth to one-third of the force. Upon contact with the enemy, the reserve provides the commander flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances and allows the unit to quickly resume its movement.

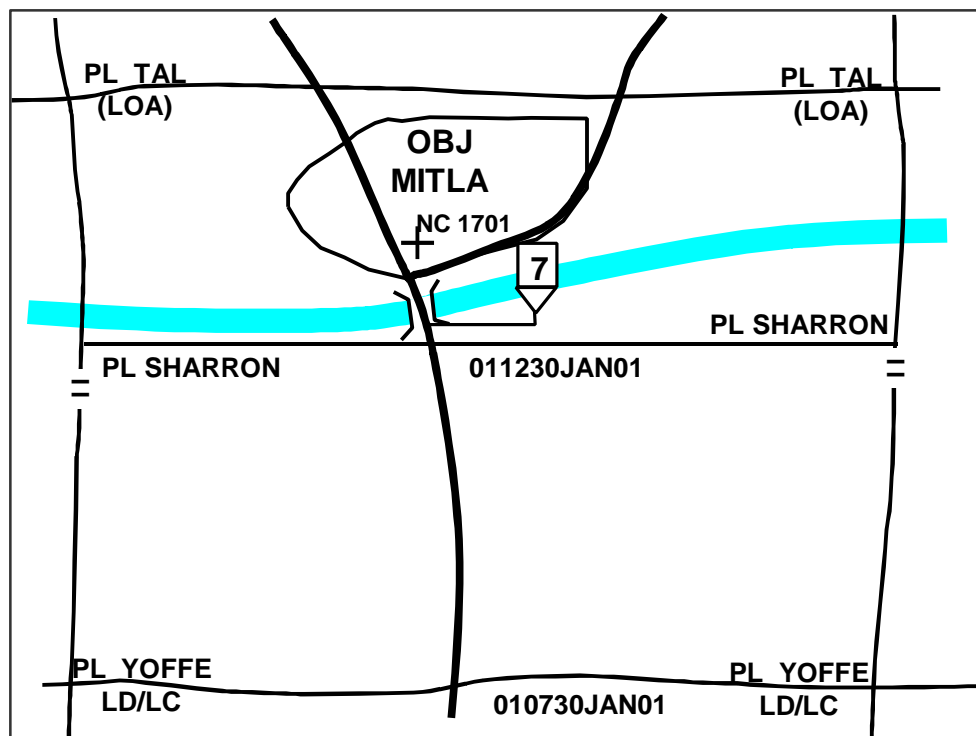
**5-13.** The commander tailors his sustainment assets to the mission. He decentralizes the execution of the sustainment support, but that support must be continuously available to the main body. This includes the use of preplanned logistics packages (LOGPACs). Aerial resupply may also be necessary to support large-scale movements to contact or to maintain the main body's momentum. Combat trains containing fuel, ammunition, medical, and maintenance assets move with their parent battalion or company team. Fuel and ammunition stocks remain loaded on tactical vehicles in the combat trains so they can instantly move when necessary. Battalion field trains move in more depth, with the forward support battalion in the main body of each brigade. Aviation units use forward arming and refuel points (FARPs) to reduce aircraft turnaround time. The commander will frequently find that his main supply routes become extended as the operation proceeds.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**5-14.** A commander will use the minimal number and type of control measures possible in a movement to contact because of the uncertain enemy situation. These measures include designation of an area of operation (AO) with left, right, front, and rear boundaries, or a separate AO bounded by a continuous boundary (noncontiguous opera-



tions). The commander further divides the AO into subordinate unit AOs to facilitate subordinate-unit actions.



**Figure 5-2. Movement to Contact Control Measures**

**5-15.** The operation will usually start from a line of departure (LD) or line of contact (LC) and specifies the time the movement to contact crosses the LD or LC. The commander controls the movement to contact using phase lines, contact points, and checkpoints as required. (See Figure 5-2.) He controls the depth of the movement to contact by using a limit of advance (LOA) or a forward boundary. Figure 5-2 shows a LOA and not a forward boundary. The commander could designate one or more objectives to limit the extent of the movement to contact. However, these are often terrain-oriented and used only to guide movement. Although a movement to contact may result in taking a terrain objective, the primary focus should be on the enemy force. If the commander has enough information to locate significant enemy forces, then he should plan some other type of offensive action.

**5-16.** The commander uses boundaries to separate the various organizational elements of a movement to contact and clearly establish responsibilities between different organizations. He can designate a series of phase lines as the on-order rear boundary of the forward security elements as they advance. Each rear boundary becomes the forward

boundary of the main body and shifts as the security force moves forward. The rear boundary of the main body designates the limit of responsibility of the rear security element. This line also shifts as the main body moves forward. See Chapter 13 for a discussion of boundaries for a security force.

**5-17.** The commander may use an axis of advance in limited visibility. However, there is the risk of enemy forces not located within the axis not being detected and being inadvertently bypassed.

## PLANNING A MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

**5-18.** The commander should not plan a movement to contact merely because of a lack of intelligence about the enemy. He conducts reconnaissance operations to determine the enemy's location and intent while conducting security operations to protect the main body. This allows the main body to focus its planning and preparation, to include rehearsals, on the conduct of the ensuing meeting engagement.

**5-19.** The commander wants to gain contact with the smallest elements possible. These elements are normally ground scouts or aeroscouts performing reconnaissance, but may also be unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or other intelligence systems. The unit's planned movement formation should contribute to the goal of making initial contact with the smallest force possible. It should also provide for efficient movement of the force and adequate reserves.

**5-20.** The frontage assigned to a unit in a movement to contact must allow it to generate sufficient combat power to maintain the momentum of the operation. Reducing the frontage covered normally gives the unit adequate combat power to develop the situation on contact while maintaining the required momentum. Both the covering force and advance guard commanders should have uncommitted forces available to develop the situation without requiring the deployment of the main body. The commander relies on fire support assets to weight the lead elements' combat power. The fire support system helps develop fire superiority when organized correctly to fire immediate suppression missions to help maneuver forces get within direct fire range of the enemy.

**5-21.** The reconnaissance effort may proceed faster in a movement to contact than in a zone reconnaissance because the emphasis is on making contact with the enemy. However, the commander must recognize that by increasing the speed of the reconnaissance effort, he increases the risk associated with the operation. Bypass criteria should be clearly stated, and any force that does bypass enemy units must maintain contact with them until they are handed off to other, usually following, elements. The commander

tasks his forward security force with conducting route reconnaissance of the routes the main body will traverse.

**5-22.** The echelon intelligence officer (G2 or S2), assisted by the engineer, must carefully analyze the terrain. He represents the enemy's most dangerous course of action in the wargaming portion of the military decision making process. He must not underestimate the enemy because of the force's vulnerability during a movement to contact. A thorough intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) — by developing intervisibility overlays and other products as well as determining movement times between phase lines and other locations — enhances the force's security by indicating danger areas where the force is most likely to make contact with the enemy. Potential danger areas are likely enemy defensive locations, engagement areas, observation posts (OPs), and obstacles. The fire support system targets these areas and they become on-order priority targets that are placed into effect and cancelled as the lead element moves up to and past them. The reconnaissance and surveillance plan supporting the movement to contact must provide for coverage of these danger areas. If reconnaissance and surveillance cannot clear these areas, more deliberate movement techniques are required.

**5-23.** The commander develops decision points to support changes in the force's movement formation. The commander uses both human and technical means to validate his decision points. The commander must determine the degree of risk he is willing to accept based on his mission. The commander's confidence in the IPB and the risk he is willing to accept determine his maneuver scheme and the combat formation he uses. In a high-risk environment, it is usually better to increase the distance between forward elements and the main body than to slow the speed of advance.

**5-24.** Corps and divisions can execute shaping operations as part of a movement to contact even though, by definition, a force conducts a movement to contact when the enemy situation is vague or totally unknown. This occurs when the necessary information regarding enemy reserves and follow-on forces is available, but information regarding those enemy forces in close proximity to the friendly force is not available. As in any other type of operation, the commander plans to focus his operations on finding the enemy and then delaying, disrupting, and destroying each enemy force element as much as possible before it arrives onto the direct fire battlefield. This allows close combat forces to prepare to engage enemy units upon their arrival.

**5-25.** In a movement to contact, the commander can opt not to designate a decisive operation until his forces make contact with the enemy unless there is a specific reason to

designate a decisive operation. This does not preclude the designation of priorities in order to focus the efforts of all support forces. He may, however, designate a decisive operation during the initial stages of a movement to contact because of the presence of a key piece of terrain or avenue of approach. If the situation is vague, the commander does not designate a decisive operation. In this case he retains resources under his direct control to reinforce the designated decisive operation once allowed by the situation to make the designation. The commander should not wait until his main body is in physical contact with the enemy to make his decision.

## EXECUTION OF A MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

**5-26.** Each element of the force maintains continuous coordination with all adjacent units and supporting elements during a movement to contact. The advance guard maintains contact with the covering force. The lead elements of the main body maintain contact with the advance guard. The rear guard and flank security elements maintain contact with and orient on the main body's movement. These security forces prevent unnecessary delay of the main body and defer the deployment of the main body as long as possible. Reconnaissance elements operate to the front and flanks of each column's advance guard and maintain contact with the covering force. The commander may instruct each column's advance guard to eliminate small pockets of resistance bypassed by forward security force. See Figure 5-3.

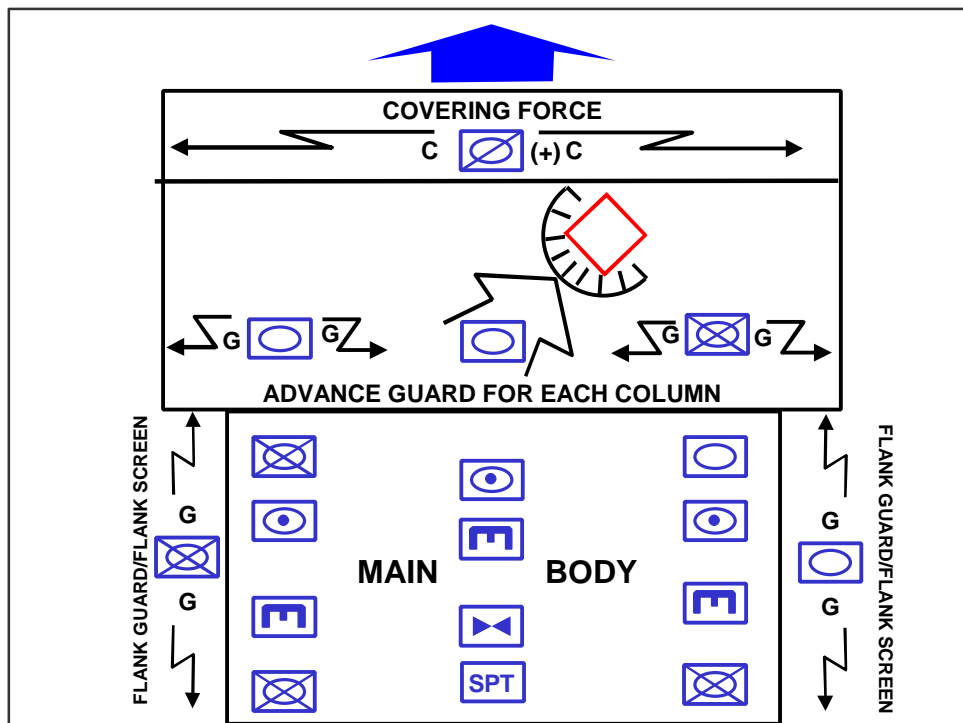


Figure 5-3. A Column Advance Guard Attacking to Destroy a Contained Enemy Force

1           **5-27.** The commander of the advance guard chooses a combat formation based on the  
2 factors of METT-TC to make contact with the smallest possible force while providing  
3 flexibility for maneuver. This is normally a column formation. It may move contin u-  
4 ously (traveling and traveling overwatch) or by bounds (bounding overwatch). It moves  
5 by bounds when contact with the enemy is imminent and the terrain is favorable. Some  
6 indirect fire assets, such as a mortar platoon or artillery battery and combat observation  
7 and lasing teams (COLTs), may be positioned with the formation. The COLTs can help  
8 overwatch the advance guard movement and indirect fires focus on suppressing enemy  
9 weapons, obscuring enemy OPs, and screening friendly movement.

10           **5-28.** The main body keeps enough distance between itself and its forward security el e-  
11 ments to maintain flexibility for maneuver. This distance varies with the level of  
12 command, the terrain, and the availability of information about the enemy. Command  
13 posts and trains travel along high-mobility routes within the AO and occupy hasty pos i-  
14 tions as necessary.

15           **5-29.** Behind these forward security elements, the main body advances over multiple  
16 parallel routes with numerous lateral branches to remain flexible and reduce the time  
17 needed to initiate maneuver. (While it is preferred for a battalion to use multiple routes,  
18 battalions and smaller units can move on just one route.) In a movement to contact, the  
19 main body's march dispositions must allow maximum flexibility for maneuvering during  
20 movement and when establishing contact with the enemy force.

21           **5-30.** Fire support systems tend to focus on suppression missions to fix enemy forces as  
22 they are encountered and smoke mission to provide cover to exposed friendly force dur-  
23 ing the conduct of a movement to contact. The commander schedules the movements of  
24 fire support systems in synchronization with the movement of the rest of the force. Fire  
25 support systems that cannot match the cross-country mobility of the combat units cause  
26 them to slow down their rate of advance. If these units do not slow down, they run the  
27 risk of outrunning their fire support. The main body updates its priority target list du r-  
28 ing the conduct of the movement to contact.

29           **5-31.** The enemy has a difficult time detecting and targeting the main body during the  
30 execution of a movement to contact until contact is made because of its speed, momen-  
31 tum, and dispersal; and the attention the commander pays to electromagnetic emission  
32 control. Once the force makes contact and concentrates on overcome detected enemies,  
33 it becomes vulnerable to strikes by enemy conventional and weapons of mass destru c-

tion. It must concentrate its combat effects rapidly and disperse again as soon as it overcomes resistance to avoid enemy counteractions.

**5-32.** Movement should be as rapid as the terrain, the mobility of the force, and the enemy situation permit. Open terrain provides maneuver space on either side of the line of march and facilitates high-speed movement. It also allows for greater dispersal and usually permits more separation between forward security elements and the main body than restricted terrain allows. The commander should never commit his main body to canalizing terrain before these forward security elements have advanced far enough to ensure that the main body will not become trapped. As the enemy situation becomes known, the commander may shorten the distance between elements of the force to decrease reaction time or he may deploy in preparation for contact.

**5-33.** At the battalion and company levels, a moving force should always move along covered or concealed routes from one covered or concealed position to another, using terrain to minimize its vulnerability to enemy weapons. Further, an overwatching force should always cover the moving force. (Chapter 14 describes movement techniques, such as overwatch.) Regardless of the specific movement technique employed, both forces need to provide mutual support and be knowledgeable about their counterpart's sectors of fire.

**5-34.** The force must attempt to cross any obstacles it encounters without loss of momentum. The commander uses his forward security forces in an attempt to seize intact bridges whenever possible. Lead security elements bypass or breach obstacles as quickly as possible to maintain the momentum of the movement. If these lead elements cannot overcome obstacles, the commander directs subsequent elements of the main body to bypass the obstacle site and take the lead. Following forces can also reduce obstacles that hinder the unit's sustainment flow.

**5-35.** The commander locates himself well forward in the movement formation. Once contact is made with the enemy, he can then move quickly to the area of contact, analyze the situation, and act aggressively. The commander's security elements conduct actions on contact to develop the situation once they find the enemy. Once they make contact with the enemy, a number of actions occur that have been divided into the following sequence for discussion purposes.

#### **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**5-36.** All reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence assets focus on determining the enemy's dispositions and providing the commander with current intelligence and rel e-

1           vant combat information; this ensures that he can commit friendly forces under optimal  
2           conditions. The commander uses all available sources of combat information to find the  
3           enemy's location and dispositions in addition to his intelligence systems. Corps and d i-  
4           visions employ long-range surveillance units and detachments in conjunction with data  
5           provided by available special operating forces, joint, and multinational assets, in add i-  
6           tion to their organic reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence assets. The  
7           commander may use his surveillance systems to cue the conduct of aerial and ground r e-  
8           connaissance.

9           **5-37.** The enemy situation becomes clearer as the unit's forward security elements co n-  
10          duct actions on contact to rapidly develop the situation in accordance with the  
11          commander's plan and intent. By determining the strength, location, and disposition of  
12          enemy forces, these security elements allow the commander to focus the effects of the  
13          main body's combat power against the enemy. The overall force must remain flexible to  
14          exploit both intelligence and combat information. The security force should not allow  
15          the enemy force to break contact unless it receives an order from the commander. When  
16          a strong covering force has not preceded the advance guard, it should seize terrain that  
17          offers essential observation.

18          **5-38. Actions on contact are a series of combat actions, often conducted**  
19          **simultaneously, taken upon contact with the enemy to develop the situa-**  
20          **tion.** Once the lead elements of a force conducting a movement to contact encounter  
21          the enemy, they conduct actions on contact. The unit treats obstacles like enemy contact,  
22          since it assumes that the obstacles are covered by fire. The unit carries out these actions  
23          on contact regardless of whether the enemy has detected its presence. Actions on con-  
24          tact are:

- 25               ● Deploy and report.
- 26               ● Develop the situation.
- 27               ● Choose a course of action.
- 28               ● Recommend a course of action to the higher commander.

29          The unit's security force often gains a tactical advantage over an enemy force by using  
30          speed and initiative to conduct these actions on contact, allowing it to gain and maintain  
31          contact without becoming decisively engaged. How quickly the unit develops the situ a-  
32          tion is directly related to its security. This speed is directly related to the unit's use of  
33          well-rehearsed SOPs and drills.

**Deploy and Report**

**5-39.** When a unit's security element encounters an enemy unit or obstacle, it deploys to a covered position that provides observation and fields of fire. If the security element is under enemy fire, it uses direct and indirect fire to suppress the enemy and restore freedom to maneuver. Simultaneously, it submits a contact report, which includes all available information on the situation. This alerts the commander and allows him to begin necessary actions.

**Develop the Situation**

**5-40.** The unit's security force develops the situation rapidly within mission constraints by employing techniques ranging from stealthy, foot-mobile reconnaissance to reconnaissance by fire, which uses both direct and indirect weapons. The security force continues its mission with other elements not currently in contact with the enemy. This helps to develop the situation across the front and provides more maneuver space to execute further actions. As the situation develops, the security force submits additional reports.

**Choose a Course of Action**

**5-41.** After the security force makes contact, its commander gathers information and chooses a course of action (COA) consistent with his higher commander's intent and within the unit's capability; this allows the security force to resume its mission as soon as possible. He cannot allow small enemy forces to delay the movement of the security force. Usually, available intelligence and the concept of the operation indicate the course of action to follow. For obstacles not covered by fire, the unit can either seek a bypass or create the required number of lanes to support its maneuver or the maneuver of a supported unit. Once enemy contact is made, these options are normally to conduct a hasty attack, bypass, hasty defense, or withdrawal. For obstacles covered by fire, the unit can either seek a bypass or conduct breaching operations, as part of a hasty attack.

**5-42.** The security force commander should determine quickly whether to bypass the enemy or attack. The security force *attacks* (see Chapter 6) if it has sufficient, immediately available combat power to overwhelm the enemy and the attack will not detract from mission accomplishment. Such attacks are usually necessary to overcome enemy attempts to slow the security force's movement. If this initial attack fails to defeat enemy defenses, the security force commander must consider other options, such as making a more deliberate attack or assuming the defense while continuing to find out as much as possible about the enemy's positions.



1           **5-43.** The security force may *bypass* the enemy if it does not have sufficient combat  
2 power or an attack would jeopardize mission accomplishment. It must request permission  
3 to bypass an enemy force unless the operations order provides bypass criteria. The  
4 security force commander must report bypassed enemy forces to the next higher headquarters,  
5 which then assumes responsibility for their destruction or containment.  
6 Alternatively, the security force could keep a minimum force in contact with the bypassed  
7 enemy so that he cannot move freely around the battlefield. (See Appendix B for  
8 a discussion of bypass.)

9           **5-44.** If the security force cannot conduct either a hasty attack or a bypass, it attempts to  
10 establish a *defense* (see Chapter 9). In the defense, the security force maintains enemy  
11 contact, continues to perform reconnaissance, and prepares to support other forces.  
12 When the security force commander decides to defend, responsibility for further action  
13 rests with his higher commander. In the event the other COAs would lead to decisive  
14 engagement or destruction, the security force conducts those activities necessary to assure  
15 self-preservation, such as *delay* or *withdrawal* (see Chapter 12), but maintains  
16 enemy contact, unless the higher commander orders otherwise.

#### 17 **Recommend a Course of Action to the Higher Commander**

18           **5-45.** Once the security force commander selects a COA, keeping in mind his commander's  
19 intent, he reports it to his higher commander, who has the option of  
20 disapproving it based on its impact on his mission. To avoid delay, unit SOPs may provide  
21 automatic approval of certain actions. If the higher commander assumes  
22 responsibility for continuing to develop the situation, the security force supports his actions  
23 as ordered.

#### 24 **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

25           **5-46.** Once contact is made, the main body commander brings overwhelming fires onto  
26 the enemy to prevent him from conducting either a spoiling attack or organizing a coherent  
27 defense. The security force commander maneuvers as quickly as possible to find  
28 gaps in the enemy's defenses. The commander uses his reconnaissance, surveillance,  
29 and intelligence assets to gain as much information as possible about the enemy's dispositions,  
30 strengths, capabilities, and intentions. As more intelligence becomes available,  
31 the main body commander attacks to destroy or disrupt enemy command and control  
32 (C<sup>2</sup>) centers, fire control nodes, and communication nets. The main body commander  
33 conducts operations to prevent enemy reserves from moving to counter his actions.  
34

**FIX THE ENEMY**

**5-47.** The commander tries to initiate maneuver at a tempo the enemy cannot match, since success in a meeting engagement depends on effective actions on contact. The security force commander does not allow the enemy to maneuver against the main body. The organization, size, and combat power of the security force are the major factors that determine the size of the enemy force it can defeat without deploying the main body.

**5-48.** The commander uses his aerial maneuver and fire support assets to fix the enemy in his current positions by directly attacking his combat and command systems and emplacing of situational obstacles. The priorities are typically to attack enemy forces in contact, his C<sup>2</sup> and fire control facilities, fire support assets, and moving enemy forces not yet in contact, such as follow-on forces and reserves. These priorities will vary with the factors of METT-TC. Attack helicopters and close air support working in joint air attack teams (JAAT) are ideally suited to engage the enemy throughout the depth of his positions.

**5-49.** The techniques a commander employs to fix the enemy when both forces are moving are different than those employed when the enemy force is stationary during the conduct of the meeting engagement. In both situations, when the security force cannot overrun the enemy by conducting a hasty frontal attack, the commander must deploy a portion of the main body. When this occurs, the unit is no longer conducting a movement to contact but an attack.

**MANEUVER**

**5-50.** If the security force cannot overrun the enemy, the commander quickly maneuvers his main body to conduct a frontal attack or an envelopment. (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of attack.) He does this to overwhelm the enemy force before it can react effectively or reinforce. The commander attempts to defeat the enemy in detail while still maintaining the momentum of his advance. After a successful attack, the main body commander resumes the movement to contact. If he did not defeat the enemy he has three main options: bypass, transition to a more deliberate attack, or conduct some type of defense. In both cases, he makes every effort to retain the initiative and prevent the enemy from stabilizing the situation by conducting violent and resolute attacks. Simultaneously he must maintain his momentum by synchronizing the actions of his combat, combat support, and combat service support elements.

**5-51.** In a frontal attack following a movement to contact, the main body moves forward by the most expeditious means. It moves rapidly and engages aggressively to

1 attack the enemy before his main forces have time to prepare for action. The co m-  
2 mander may order an attack from a march column for one of the main body's columns,  
3 while the rest of the main body deploys. The commander can also wait to attack until he  
4 can bring the bulk of the main body forward. He avoids piecemeal com mitment except  
5 when rapidity of action is es sential and combat superiorit y at the vital point is present  
6 and can be maintained throughout the attack, or when compartmentalized terrain forces  
7 such a course of action.

8 **5-52.** When trying to conduct an envelopment, the commander focuses on attacking the  
9 enemy's flanks and rear before he is prepared to counter these actions. The commander  
10 can use the security force to fix the enemy while the main body maneuvers to look for an  
11 assailable flank. He can also use the main body to fix the enemy while the security force  
12 finds the assailable flank.

### 13 FOLLOW THROUGH

14 **5-53.** If the enemy is defeated, the unit transitions back into a movement to contact and  
15 continues to advance. The movement to contact terminates when the unit reaches the  
16 final objective or limit of advance or must transition to a more deliberate attack, a d e-  
17 fense, or retrograde. For more discussion of these types of operations, see the respective  
18 chapters in this manual.

### 19 SEARCH AND ATTACK

20 **5-54. *Search and attack* is a technique of conducting a movement to contact that**  
21 **shares many of the characteristics of an area security mission.** Conducted primarily  
22 by light infantry, often supported by mechanized and armored forces, a commander e m-  
23 ploys this form of a movement to contact when the enemy is operating as small,  
24 dispersed elements or when the task is to deny the enemy the ability to move within a  
25 given area. The battalion is the echelon that normally conducts a search and attack. A  
26 brigade will assist its subordinate battalions by ensuring the availability of indirect fires  
27 and other support.

### 28 ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

29 **5-55.** The commander task-organizes his unit into reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing  
30 forces, each with a specific task and purpose. The size of the reconnaissance force is  
31 based on the available intelligence about the size of enemy forces in the AO. The less  
32 known about the situation, the larger the reconnaissance force. The reconnaissance  
33 force typically consists of scout, infantry, aviation, and electronic warfare assets. The  
34 fixing force must have enough combat power to isolate the enemy once the reconnai s-

sance force finds him. The finishing force must have enough combat power to defeat those enemy forces expected to be located within the AO. The commander can direct each subordinate unit to retain a finishing force or he can retain the finishing force at his echelon. The commander may rotate his subordinate elements through the reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing roles. However, rotating roles may require a change in task organization and additional time for rehearsal.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**5-56.** The commander establishes control measures that allow for decentralized actions and small-unit initiative to the greatest extent possible. The minimum control measures for a search and attack are an AO, target reference points (TRPs), objectives, checkpoints, and coordination points. (See Figure 5-4.) The use of TRPs facilitate responsive fire support once the reconnaissance force makes contact with the enemy. The commander uses objectives and checkpoints to guide the movement of subordinate elements. Coordination points indicate a specific location for the coordination of fires and movement between adjacent units. The commander uses other control measures, such as phase lines, as necessary. See Chapters 3 and 4 for definitions of these control measures.

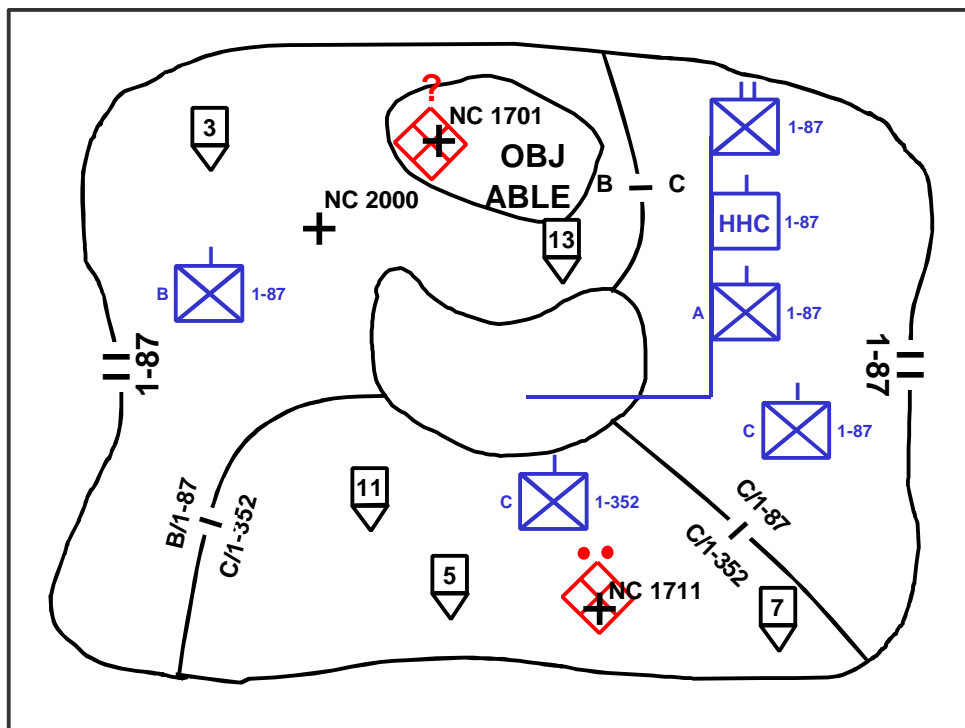


Figure 5-4. Search and Attack Control Measures

## PLANNING A SEARCH AND ATTACK

**5-57.** A commander conducts a search and attack for one or more of the following purposes:

- Destruction of the enemy: render enemy units in the AO combat-ineffective.
- Area denial: prevent the enemy from operating unhindered in a given area; for example, in any area he is using for a base camp or for logistics support.
- Protect the force: prevent the enemy from disrupting and destroying friendly military or civilian operations, equipment, property, and key facilities.
- Information collection: gain information about the enemy and the terrain to confirm or deny the products of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process.

**5-58.** The products of the IPB process are critical to the conduct of a search and attack. They focus the force's reconnaissance efforts on likely enemy locations. It may take a great deal of time to pattern enemy operations; however, a search and attack is only effective after the force identifies the enemy's pattern of operations.

**5-59.** The search and attack plan directs the finishing force, as the decisive operation, to likely locations of enemy base camps, command and control sites, air defense artillery sites, and mortars. The commander weights this decisive operation by use of priority of fires and other available combat multipliers, such as engineer elements and helicopter lift support. The commander establishes control measures as necessary to consolidate units and concentrate the force's combat power before the attack. Once the reconnaissance force locates the enemy, the fixing and finishing forces can fix and destroy him quickly. The commander also develops a contingency plan in the event that the reconnaissance force is compromised.

**5-60.** Fire support plans must provide for flexible, rapid fires throughout the AO. The commander positions his fire support assets so they can support subordinate elements throughout the AO. The commander must establish procedures for the rapid clearance of fires. To clear fires rapidly, command posts and small-unit commanders must track and report the locations of all subordinate elements. Because of the uncertain enemy situation, the commander is careful to assign clear fire-support relationships.

## EXECUTION OF A SEARCH AND ATTACK

**5-61.** Each subordinate element operating in its own AO is tasked to destroy the enemy within its capability. The commander should have in place previously established control measures and communications means between any closing elements to prevent fratricide. The reconnaissance force conducts a zone reconnaissance to reconnoiter identified named areas of interest (NAIs).

1           **5-62.** Once the reconnaissance force finds the enemy force, the fixing force develops the  
2 situation, then executes one of two options based on the commander's guidance and the  
3 factors of METT-TC. The first option is to block identified routes that the detected en-  
4 emy can use to escape or rush reinforcement over. The fixing force maintains contact  
5 with the enemy and positions its forces to isolate and fix him before the finishing force  
6 attacks. The second option is to conduct an attack to fix the enemy in his current pos i-  
7 tions until the finishing force arrives. The fixing force attacks if that action meets the  
8 commander's intent and it can generate sufficient combat power against the detected e n-  
9 emy. Depending on the enemy's mobility and the likelihood of the reconnaissance force  
10 being compromised, the commander may need to position his fixing force before his r e-  
11 connaissance force enters the AO.

12           **5-63.** Brigades and possibly battalions may establish fire support bases as part of the  
13 operations of their fixing force to provide fire support coverage throughout the area of  
14 operations during search and attack operations conducted in restricted terrain. These  
15 positions should be mutually supporting and prepared for all-around defense. They are  
16 located in positions that facilitate aerial resu pply.

17           **5-64.** If conditions are not right to use the finishing force to attack the detected enemy,  
18 the reconnaissance or the fixing force can continue to conduct reconnaissance and su r-  
19 veillance activities to continue to develop the situation. Whenever this occurs, the force  
20 maintaining surveillance must be careful to avoid detection and possible enemy a m-  
21 bushes.

22           **5-65.** The finishing force may move behind the reconnaissance and fixing forces, or it  
23 may locate at a pickup zone and air-assault into a landing zone near the enemy once he  
24 is located. The finishing force must be responsive enough to engage the enemy before  
25 he can break contact with the reconnaissance force or the fixing force. The echelon i n-  
26 telligence officer provides the commander with an estimate of the time it will take the  
27 enemy to displace from his detected location. The commander provides additional m o-  
28 bility assets so the finishing force can respond within that time frame.

29           **5-66.** The commander uses his finishing force to destroy the detected and fixed enemy  
30 during a search and attack by conducting hasty or deliberate attacks, maneuvering to  
31 block enemy escape routes while another unit conducts the attack, or employing indirect  
32 fire or close air support to destroy the enemy. The commander may have his finishing  
33 force establish an area ambush and use his reconnaissance and fixing forces to drive the  
34 enemy into the ambushes.

*"To advance is to conquer."*

Frederick the Great

## CHAPTER 6 ATTACK

**An attack is a type of offensive action that defeats an enemy force, seizes and secures terrain, or both.** When the commander decides to attack or the opportunity to attack occurs during combat operations, the execution of that attack must mass the effects of overwhelming combat power against selected portions of the enemy force with a tempo and intensity that cannot be matched by the enemy. The resulting combat should not be a contest between near equals. The attacker must be determined to seek decision on the ground of his choosing through the deliberate orchestration and employment of his combined arms team.

**6-2.** Attacks take place along a continuum defined at one end by fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) that direct the execution of rapidly executed battle drills by forces immediately available. Published, detailed orders with multiple branches and sequels; detailed

knowledge of all aspects of enemy dispositions; a force that has been task-organized specifically for the operation; and the conduct of extensive rehearsals define the other end of the continuum. Most attacks fall between the ends of the continuum as opposed to either extreme. Chapter 1 discusses this continuum between hasty and deliberate operations,

### ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**6-3.** Once a commander determines his scheme of maneuver, he task-organizes or retask-organizes his force to give each unit enough combat power to accomplish its

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mission. He should complete any changes in task organization in time to allow units to conduct rehearsals with their attached or supported unit. The best place and time for an attacking force to task-organize is when it is in an assembly area.

## **SECURITY FORCES**

**6-4.** Under normal circumstances, a commander resources dedicated security forces during an attack only if the attack will uncover one or more flanks or the rear of the attacking force as it advances. In this case, the commander designates a flank or rear security force and assigns it a guard or screen mission, depending on the factors of METT-T. Normally an attacking unit does not need extensive forward security forces; most attacks are launched from positions in contact with the enemy, which reduces the usefulness of a separate forward security force. The exception occurs when the attacking unit is transitioning from the defense to an attack and had previously established a security area as part of the defense.

## **MAIN BODY**

**6-5.** The commander organizes his main body into combined arms formations to conduct his decisive operation or operations. The commander aims his decisive operation toward the immediate and decisive destruction of the enemy force, its will to resist, or the defeat of the enemy's plan. His maneuver scheme identifies the focus of the decisive operation. All of the force's available resources operate in concert to assure the success of the decisive operation. The subordinate unit or units designated to conduct the decisive operation or operations can change during the course of the attack. The commander designates an assault, breach, and support force if he expects to conduct a breach operation during the conduct of his attack.

**6-6.** If it is impractical to determine initially when or where the decisive operation will be, such as during a hasty attack, the commander retains flexibility by arranging his forces in depth, holding out strong reserves, and maintaining centralized control of his long-range fire support systems. As soon as the tactical situation clarifies enough to allow the commander to designate his decisive operation, he focuses his resources to support that decisive operation's achievement of its objective. Enemy actions, minor changes in the situation, or the lack of success by other elements cannot be allowed to divert either forces or their effects from the decisive operation.

**6-7.** The commander may need to designate a unit or units to conduct shaping operations to create windows of opportunity for the conduct of his decisive operations. He allocates the unit or units assigned to conduct a shaping operation the minimal



combat power necessary to accomplish the missions since he cannot employ overwhelming combat power everywhere. Units conducting shaping operations usually have a wider area of operations (AO) than those conducting a decisive operation. If the commander has sufficient forces, as part of his shaping operations, he can assign the tasks of follow and assume or follow and support to subordinate units. Appendix B defines these two tactical tasks.

## **RESERVE**

**6-8.** The commander uses his reserve to restore momentum to a stalled attack, defeat enemy counterattacks, and exploit success. The reserve — prior to its commitment — conducts shaping operations. Once committed, the reserve's actions normally become the decisive operation, and every effort is made to reconstitute another reserve from units made available by the revised situation. Often a commander's most difficult and important decision concerns the time, place, and circumstances for committing the reserve. The reserve is not a committed force and is not used as a follow and support force or a follow and assume force.

**6-9.** In the attack, the combat power allocated to the reserve depends primarily on the level of uncertainty about the enemy, especially the strength of any expected enemy counterattacks. The commander only needs to resource a small reserve to respond to unanticipated enemy reactions when he has detailed information about the enemy. When the situation is relatively clear and enemy capabilities are limited, the reserve may consist of a small fraction of the command. When the situation is vague, the reserve may initially contain the majority of the commander's combat power.

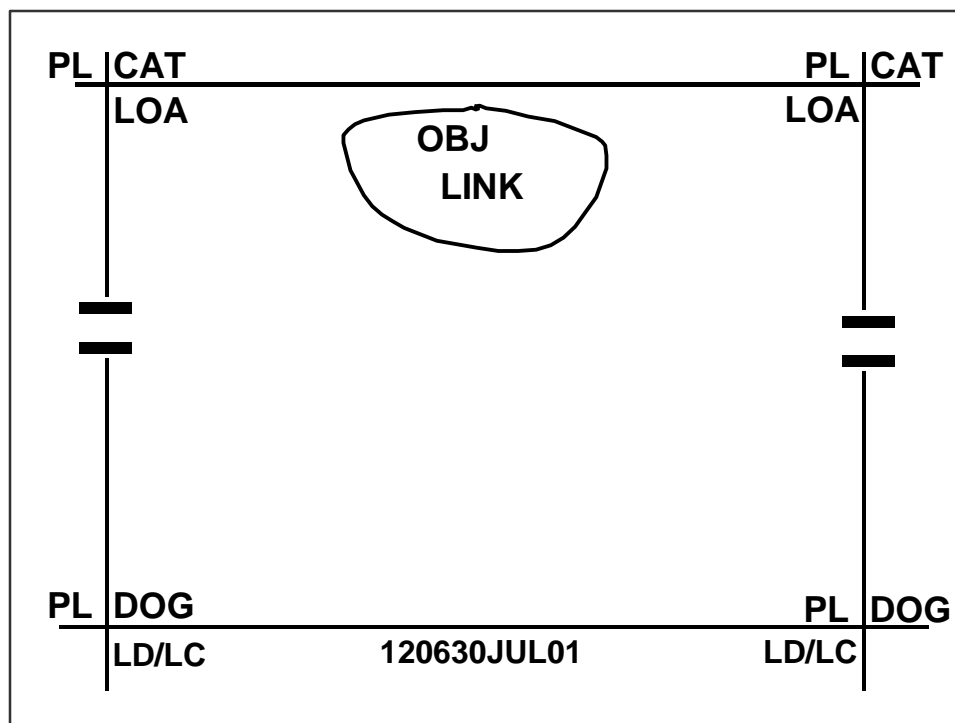
**6-10.** In addition, the strength and composition of the reserve vary with the reserve's contemplated missions, the forces available, the form of offensive maneuver selected, the terrain, and acceptable risk. For example, in a hasty attack the reserve can contain up to one-third of the force's combat power. Alternatively, in a deliberate attack the reserve is normally sized to defeat the enemy's counterattack forces. The commander should not constitute his reserve by weakening his decisive operation. A reserve must have mobility equal to or greater than the most dangerous enemy ground threat, and it must be able to fight the most dangerous enemy ground threat.

**6-11.** In an attack the commander generally locates his reserve to the rear of the unit making his decisive operation. However, it must be able to move quickly to areas where it is needed in different contingencies. This is most likely to occur if the enemy has strong counterattack forces. For heavy reserve forces, the key factor is cross-country

mobility or road networks. For light forces, the key factor is the road network, if trucks are available, or the availability of pickup zones (PZs) for air assault forces. The commander prioritizes the positioning of his reserve to counter the worst case enemy counterattack first, then to reinforce the success of the decisive operation.

## SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS

**6-12.** The commander resources his sustainment operations to support the attacking force. In an attack, the commander tries to position his CSS units well forward. From these forward locations they can sustain the attacking force, providing priority of support to the decisive operation. As the attacking force advances, CSS units displace forward as required to shorten the supply lines using different displacement techniques to ensure uninterrupted support to maneuver units. The size of the force a commander devotes to sustainment area security depends on the threat in the attacking force's sustainment area. A significant enemy threat requires the commander to resource a tactical combat force. Chapter 13 addresses area security operations in more detail.



**Figure 6-1. Minimum Attack Control Measures**

## CONTROL MEASURES

**6-13.** Units conducting offensive operations are assigned an area of operations (AO) within which to operate. Within the AO, the commander normally designates the following graphic control measures regardless of whether he operates in a contiguous or noncontiguous environment:

- Areas of operations for subordinate units of battalion-size or larger.
- Phase line as the line of departure (LD), which may also be the line of contact (LC).
- Time to initiate the operation.
- Objective.
- Limit of advance.

If necessary, a commander can use either an axis of advance or a direction of attack to further control his maneuver forces. Figure 6-1 depicts the minimum control measures for an attack.

**6-14.** A commander can use any other control measures necessary to control his attack. Short of the LD/LC, the commander may designate assembly areas and attack positions where the unit prepares for offensive operations or waits for the establishment of the required conditions to initiate the attack. Beyond the LD/LC he may designate checkpoints, phase lines (PLs), probable line of deployment (PLD), assault positions, and direct and indirect fire support coordination measures. Between the PLD and the objective he can use a final coordination line (FCL), assault positions, support-by-fire and attack-by-fire positions, and time of assault to further control the final stage of the attack. The use of these control measures are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. They describe how a commander can use attack positions, axis of advance, combat formations, direction of attack, limit of advance, a LD, objectives, PLD, and a time of attack to help control the operation. Chapter 3 describes the use of AOs, assembly areas, line of contact, phase lines, and common direct and indirect fire coordinating measures.

**6-15.** In an attack taking place under limited visibility conditions, the commander wants positive control over the movement of all attacking elements. He typically imposes additional control measures beyond those that he would use in a daylight attack. These additional measures may include the use of a point of departure (PD) and a direction of attack.

## PLANNING AN ATTACK

**6-16.** In an attack, friendly forces seek to place the enemy in a position where he can easily be defeated or destroyed. The commander seeks to keep the enemy off-balance

while continually reducing the enemy's options. In an attack the commander focuses the maneuver effects, supported by the other battlefield operating systems, on those enemy forces that prevent him from accomplishing his mission and seizing his objective. Planning helps a commander synchronize the effects of his combat power through the conduct of the military decision making process outlined in FM 101-5 and troop leading procedures.

**6-17.** This section address those considerations unique to an attack by BOS. There are no unique logistics or CSS planning considerations that apply only to the attack. Those CSS planning considerations discussed in Chapter 4 continue to apply.

**6-18. Fire superiority is that degree of dominance in the fires of one force over another that permits that force to conduct maneuver at a given time and place without prohibitive interference by the enemy.** The commander plans to focus the effects of friendly systems to achieve fire superiority and allow friendly maneuver forces to breach the enemy's defensive network. The force must gain and maintain fire superiority at critical points during the attack. Possession of fire superiority allows the commander to maneuver his forces without prohibitive losses. The commander gains fire superiority by using a variety of tactics, techniques, and procedures. These include the use of counterfires and precision fires, suppression of enemy positions, and the destruction of key facilities and assets. The commander relies on the range and lethality of available weapon systems, as well as movement, to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage where his weapons can be destroyed, one or more at a time, with little risk to friendly weapon systems.

**6-19.** The factors of METT-TC normally require an attack conducted during limited visibility be more deliberate except when it occurs as part of the follow-up to a daylight attack or as part of an exploitation or pursuit operation. The commander planning a night attack must consider how limited visibility will complicate controlling units, soldiers, and fires; identifying and engaging targets; navigating and moving without being detected; locating, treating, and evacuating casualties; and locating and bypassing or breaching enemy obstacles.

#### **DEPLOY/CONDUCT MANEUVER**

**6-20.** In his plan of attack, the commander seeks to surprise his enemy. He achieves surprise by choosing an unexpected direction, time, type, or strength for the attack and by exploiting the success of military deception operations. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses enemy C<sup>2</sup>, induces psychological shock in the enemy,

and reduces the coherence of the enemy defense. The commander achieves tactical surprise by attacking in bad weather and over seemingly impossible terrain, conducting feints and demonstrations, maintaining a high tempo, destroying enemy forces, and employing sound operations security. He may plan different attack times for his decisive and shaping operations to mislead the enemy and allow the shifting of supporting fires to successive attacking echelons. However, simultaneous attacks provide maximum mass in the initial assault. They also prevent the enemy from concentrating his fires against successive attacks.

**6-21.** In planning, the commander and subordinate leaders focus on the routes, formations, and navigational aids they will use to traverse the ground from the LD or PD to the objective. Some terrain locations may require the attacking unit to change its combat formation, direction of movement, or movement technique when it reaches those locations. The unit can post guides at these critical locations to ensure the maintenance of control over the movement.

**6-22.** The commander attacks targets throughout the depth of the enemy's defense to keep him off balance and limit his freedom of action.

***"I never sent a company if a battalion would do."***

**Attributed to  
British Field Marshal Slim**

However, at the point of the decisive operation, the commander wants to concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power against the enemy to shatter the cohesion of his defense. The commander accomplishes this by applying combat power against the enemy at a level of violence and in a manner that he cannot match. This combat power can be similar in nature to that of the enemy. For example, the commander could concentrate in time and space the application of a field artillery brigade's firepower against an enemy battery in a counterbattery duel. The commander could also converge a tank-heavy battalion task force's shock action and fire power against one enemy rifle platoon's hastily prepared defensive position. He can also apply extraordinary levels of force at a tempo that the enemy has no capability to either absorb or counter to overwhelm an enemy force. For example, a commander could target an enemy tank battalion located in a geographically distant assembly area for attack using the Block II Army tactical missile system (ATACMS) munitions, quickly followed by attack helicopters to destroy the enemy battalion's remaining combat vehicles.

**6-23.** Another aspect of concentration is the ability to rapidly concentrate force effects such as fires and offensive information operations during movement. This is especially

critical when crossing linear obstacles. Each subordinate element tends to move out independently when it completes passage through a choke point. This independent movement detracts from the ability of the whole force to rapidly generate combat power on the far side of the obstacle.

## **Reconnaissance**

**6-24.** The commander takes every opportunity to gain and refine combat information regarding the enemy. He uses his available reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence assets to gather combat information and process it into intelligence. Information gathered during the planning phase of the plan, prepare, and execute cycle is especially useful in determining the viability of each course of action developed. Generally, if a commander does not have good intelligence and, therefore, does not know where the overwhelming majority of the enemy's units and systems are located, he cannot conduct a deliberate attack. He must conduct a movement to contact, a hasty attack, or collect more combat information.

**6-25.** The two fundamental employment techniques for reconnaissance in the attack are: reconnaissance-pull and reconnaissance-push. In reconnaissance-pull, the reconnaissance objective is to find weaknesses in enemy dispositions that can be exploited by the main force. Reconnaissance is launched over a broad area, which allows the reconnaissance elements to identify enemy weaknesses to exploit and enemy strengths to avoid. Once these are identified, the commander exploits the situation by choosing a course of action that allows his decisive operation to attack enemy weaknesses and penetrate gaps in the enemy's defense. The commander can then commit forces to widen the gap and envelop the enemy. The reconnaissance elements continue to move, seeking paths of least resistance and pulling the main body deep into the enemy's rear.

**6-26.** In reconnaissance-push, the reconnaissance objective is to identify the obstacles and enemy forces the attack forces must overcome to assault the objective in a previously chosen location in accordance with a course of action selected prior to the reconnaissance. Once friendly reconnaissance elements gain contact with the enemy, they develop the situation within their capabilities. If the objective is an enemy force, the reconnaissance element orients on it to maintain contact and determine as much as possible about its dispositions.

**6-27.** The commander ensures that reconnaissance and surveillance of the enemy's defensive positions and any terrain critical to the scheme of maneuver continue

throughout the attack. If the enemy attempts to modify his defenses, those actions will be detected. In turn, this allows the commander to adjust his scheme of maneuver as the enemy situation becomes clearer. The commander can use human and technological means acting separately or in combination to provide the required degree of reconnaissance and surveillance.

**6-28.** A commander's organic capability to sense the enemy and the AO's environment varies by echelon. At the corps echelon these assets include a military intelligence (MI) brigade, an armored cavalry regiment (ACR), and parts of almost every major subordinate command within the corps. Even a company conducts reconnaissance patrols. For more information on reconnaissance operations see FM 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance Operations*.

### **Daylight Attacks**

**6-29.** Daylight attacks allow friendly and enemy forces to effectively use their equipment while facilitating command and control. They are the least stressful psychologically and physically on the attacking units. The commander and his staff develop enemy situational and weapons templates based on all available combat information and the analysis of that data. These templates help to determine the feasibility of available courses of action designed to achieve that position of advantage. The plans for the attack establish any bypass criteria for the operation. The unit's standing operating procedures (SOP) may also establish bypass criteria.

### **Limited-Visibility Attacks**

**6-30.** Commanders attack in limited-visibility conditions to take advantage of American night-vision and navigational superiority against most potential enemy ground forces. Intensively trained forces equipped for such combat have significant advantages over an enemy who is unprepared for limited-visibility combat. When the friendly force's capabilities for limited-visibility operations are significantly greater than those of an enemy, limited-visibility attacks may be the norm. Table 6-1 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of conducting limited-visibility attacks.

<b>ADVANTAGES OF LIMITED-VISIBILITY ATTACKS</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES OF LIMITED-VISIBILITY ATTACKS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Defenses are more susceptible to infiltration.</li> <li>● Darkness can conceal the movement of large forces.</li> <li>● Physical and psychological factors favor the attacker, as shock, disorientation, and isolation are easier to achieve.</li> <li>● Air assets can operate more safely because air defenders with only optical sights have greater difficulty acquiring targets at night.</li> <li>● The element of surprise may increase because defenders are more susceptible to deception techniques, such as dummy lights, noise, smoke, and fires.</li> <li>● The defender cannot employ his reserves as quickly at night as he can during daylight conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Command and control is more difficult.</li> <li>● The defender can react easier to changing situations.</li> <li>● The attacker has difficulty determining the limits of obstacle systems.</li> <li>● Restrictive terrain is more difficult to traverse.</li> <li>● Light, smoke, noise, and fires can deceive the attacker.</li> <li>● The attacker loses momentum because he attacks at a reduced speed to maintain the coherence of his unit.</li> <li>● Land navigation, without GPS, is more difficult at night; units may become separated, cohesion can be lost, and support elements can move to the wrong positions.</li> <li>● The enemy can reposition or emplace obstacles during darkness without being detected by friendly reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence assets.</li> <li>● Attacking units are easier to ambush at night.</li> <li>● Adjusting indirect fire is difficult, even with night-vision devices or illumination.</li> <li>● Units require significantly larger quantities of signal ammunition such as smoke, tracers, flares, and illumination rounds.</li> <li>● The task of locating and evacuating casualties is more difficult to execute.</li> <li>● The risk of fratricide may increase.</li> </ul>

**Table 6-1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Limited Visibility Attacks**

**6-31.** Highly trained units equipped with modern night-vision devices conduct limited-visibility attacks in a manner similar to the way they conduct daylight attacks. Units without extensive night-vision devices can use the darkness to their advantage to conceal



their movement to allow them to get as close to the enemy positions as possible. Troops that are well-trained for limited-visibility operations and take full advantage of the superiority of their night-vision equipment gain significant tactical and psychological advantages when attacking the enemy at night or in other conditions of reduced visibility. The commander should understand the different night vision capabilities of all elements participating in the attack and make any adjustments necessary to his plan based on these differences. The commander should take advantage of his superior night-fighting capabilities whenever possible.

**6-32.** The basic organization of forces for a limited-visibility/night attack is the same as for any other attack. However, changing an existing task organization under limited visibility conditions requires much more time and effort than it does during daylight. Small tactical organizations, such as combat crews and infantry squads, should be resourced as close as possible to full strength, even if this means reducing the total number of these small tactical groups.

**6-33.** Limited-visibility attacks are characterized as either illuminated or nonilluminated. Nonilluminated attacks offer the best chance of gaining surprise. Illumination, however, is normally planned for every limited-visibility attack so that it can be readily available if required. The commander can choose to conduct a nonilluminated attack until his forces make contact with the enemy. At that point, he can illuminate the objective. The enemy can also choose to employ illumination to increase the effectiveness of his defensive efforts. US Army units generally conduct nonilluminated attacks although they always plan for illumination. All leaders within the attacking unit must understand the time, conditions, and authority required to employ illumination.

**6-34.** Illuminated, supported attacks are almost like daylight attacks. They are most effective when speed is essential, time for reconnaissance is limited, or the enemy is weak and disorganized. If the commander employs illumination, it should continue until the force secures the objective. The commander should place the illumination beyond the objective to silhouette objects on the objective. This helps the assaulting force see and fire at withdrawing or counterattacking enemy force. The commander may also employ illumination in several locations to confuse the enemy regarding the exact place of attack.

**6-35.** The commander plans for limited-visibility operations in the same manner that he does for daylight operations, with emphasis on:

- Keeping the plan simple.
- Taking additional time for reconnaissance.
- Taking advantage of easily identifiable terrain features, such as roads and railroad tracks, when establishing control measures.
- Using intermediate objectives as necessary to control and maintain the correct movement direction during the attack.
- Concealing preparations.
- Scheduling initial rehearsals during daylight with the final rehearsal at night.

**6-36.** To simplify control problems, the commander may weight his support element over the assault force to reduce the number of friendly soldiers moving on the objective in the darkness. Developing a plan that does not require the unit to change its movement azimuth after it crosses the LD/PD helps to simplify the plan execution.

#### **DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE**

**6-37.** To employ the proper capabilities and tactics, the commander must have detailed knowledge of the enemy's organization, equipment, and tactics. He must understand the enemy's strengths and weaknesses. Ideally, this knowledge is available during the military decision-making process; however, this is rarely the case. Before the attack, a unit conducts intelligence operations to determine:

- The location and strength of enemy security and main defensive forces in the AO.
- The location, depth, and extent of enemy positions, especially flanks and weakly defended areas.
- The location and extent of contaminated areas.
- The location of the enemy's artillery and air defense weapons and command posts.
- The location and extent of obstacles, possible breach sites, and enemy engagement areas.
- The location of areas where attacking units could become disoriented, such as rough or restrictive terrain.
- The most favorable routes of approach to the attack objective.
- Areas that the attacker can use for flanking fire and maneuver, such as support by fire and attack by fire positions.
- Suitability of planned friendly assault, support, artillery, and CSS positions.

Commanders and leaders at all echelons should personally participate in this process.

#### **EMPLOY FIREPOWER**

**6-38.** The planning process for any attack must identify critical times and places where the commander needs the maximum amount of fire support. The commander's guidance gives specified attack criteria for fire support, thus focusing the planning and execution efforts on those critical times and events. The specified attack criteria are a compilation of the commander's guidance, desired effects, high-payoff targets and attack priorities. The amount of time available to plan the operation constrains the

commander's ability to synchronize fire support operations that employ well-matched effects of all available assets against high-payoff targets.

**6-39.** The goal of the commander's attack criteria is to focus fires on siezing the initiative. The commander emphasizes simple and rapidly integrated fire support plans. This is done by using quick fire planning techniques and good SOPs. The commander integrates his fire support assets as far forward as possible in the movement formation to facilitate early emplacement. Fires concentrate (mass) on forward enemy elements to enable maneuver efforts to close with the enemy positions. Fire support isolates forward enemy elements using long range fires, air support, and electronic warfare.

**6-40.** The commander expects fires to enable the commander's maneuver by destroying and neutralizing strong enemy forces and positions. To achieve these more demanding effects criteria, the fire support system must take full advantage of preparation time.

Fire support plans feature the following characteristics:

- Targets that are confirmed or denied by the intelligence and reconnaissance efforts.
- Possible use of preparation and deception fires to shape the enemy's defense.
- Air support to destroy high-payoff targets on the objective and then shift to reinforcing enemy units, artillery assets, and command and control nodes.
- Proactive suppression of enemy air defense effort.
- Preparation fires that shift just as the maneuver force arrives on the objective.
- Suppression and obsuration fire plan to support breaching operations.
- Prepositioned ammunition.
- Integration of primary and backup observers to engage high-priority targets.
- Signals for lifting and shifting fires on the objective, primarily by combat net radio and by visual signals as a backup means.
- Fire support coordinating measures for each supporting fire support weapon system, accounting for danger close and other technical constraints, to allow maneuver forces to get as close as possible to the objective before lifting fires.

#### **EXERCISE COMMAND AND CONTROL**

**6-41.** The commander states the desired effect of fires on the enemy weapon systems, such as suppression or destruction, as part of his planning process. He assigns subordinate units their missions and imposes graphic control measures necessary to synchronize and maintain control over the operation.

**6-42.** Using the enemy situational and weapons templates previously developed, the commander determines his probable line of contact and enemy trigger lines. As he arrays his subordinate elements to shape the battlefield, he matches his weapon systems against the enemy's to determine his PLD. Once he determines his PLD, he establishes how long it takes him to move from the LD to the PLD and any support by fire positions

the attack requires. He establishes when and where his force must maneuver into enemy direct fire range.

**6-43.** In addition to providing for the achievement of critical objectives, every attack plan must contain provisions for exploiting success or any advantages that may arise during the operation. The commander exploits success by aggressively executing the plan, promoting subordinate leader initiative, and using units that can rapidly execute battle drills. The reserve provides the commander with flexibility to exploit unforeseen advantages. In his plan, the commander locates his reserve to: provide maximum protection against hostile observation and fire, favor the decisive operation, and provide security for the command. The reserve should also be located to facilitate its rapid movement to points of probable employment.

### **PROTECT THE FORCE**

**6-44.** The commander conducts operations that deny the enemy the capability to threaten the force or interfere with the attack. He uses the following means to protect his unit:

- Conduct area security operations.
- Employ operations security (OPSEC) procedures.
- Execute deception operations.
- Conduct defensive information operations.
- Employ camouflage, cover, and concealment.
- Conduct active and passive air defense operations.
- Conduct NBC and radiological defense operations.

Although this list is not all-inclusive, it typifies those measures taken by a commander to protect his forces.

### **ATTACK PREPARATIONS**

**6-45.** Even in fluid situations, attacks are best organized and coordinated in assembly areas. If the commander decides that rapid action is essential to retain a tactical advantage, he may opt not to use an assembly area. Detailed advance planning, combined with digital communications, SOP, and battle drills, reduces any negative impacts of such a decision.

**6-46.** Unless already in one, the attacking unit moves into an assembly area during the preparation phase. The unit moves with as much secrecy as possible, normally at night and along routes that prevent or degrade the enemy's capabilities to visually observe or otherwise detect the movement. It avoids congesting its assembly area and occupies it for the minimum possible time. While in the assembly area, each unit provides its own local ground security and air defense.

**6-47.** Units moving to assembly areas send out their quartering parties and link up with their guides at the designated locations. While subordinate units move to and occupy assembly areas, the commander completes the process of planning and coordinating the attack.

**6-48.** The attacking unit completes its final preparations for the attack in the assembly area as far as practicable before moving to an attack position. These preparations include:

- Protection of the force.
- Reconnaissance.
- Plan refinement.
- Troop briefings.
- Rehearsals.
- Movement forward of necessary logistics support.
- Adequate rest for both leaders and soldiers.
- Positioning of the force for subsequent action.

As part of troop-leading procedures, leaders at all levels should conduct a personal reconnaissance of the actual terrain. If a limited-visibility attack is planned, they should also reconnoiter the terrain at night.

**6-48.** A thorough reconnaissance of the objective, its foreground, and other enemy positions is a critical part of attack preparations. Reconnaissance forces infiltrate through the enemy security zone to conduct an area reconnaissance. They can employ precision munitions and conventional indirect fires to destroy detected enemy outposts while remaining undetected. They locate and attempt to infiltrate the enemy's main defensive positions to confirm his dispositions. When properly task-organized, forces conducting reconnaissance may also be given a mission to conduct covert breaches in the enemy's obstacle complexes to facilitate rapid movement of the decisive or shaping operation.

**6-49.** During this phase, the commander positions artillery target acquisition radars to provide support throughout the AO. Divisions and corps establish quick-fire channels between sensors, such as counterbattery radars and firing units, to rapidly silence enemy indirect fire systems. These channels do not change command relationships or priority of fires.

**6-50.** The commander exercises and refines his maneuver and fire plans during rehearsals. Rehearsals are an important part of ensuring the plan's coordination and synchronization. As part of the rehearsal process, the commander and his subordinates review the anticipated battle sequence to ensure all units understand the plan, the

relationship between fire and movement, and the synchronization of critical events.

These critical events include:

- Occupation of support-by-fire positions.
- Conduct of the breach.
- Assault of the objective.
- Consolidation on the objective.
- Exploitation or pursuit.

The unit should conduct rehearsals under as many types of adverse conditions as possible with time and other restraints to identify and prepare the unit to cope with problems. At lower tactical echelons, the rehearsal includes battle drills, such as creating lanes through minefields.

**6-51.** From their assembly areas, attacking units move to their respective LDs. Units move from assembly areas to the LD in the same way as for any other tactical movement. (Chapter 14 details troop movements.) The number of columns a unit employs in its movement depends on the availability of suitable routes and the friendly and enemy situation. The march formation is governed primarily by the tactical situation and the order in which the commander wants his subordinate units to arrive at their attack positions. The use of an LD facilitates the start of the attack at the prescribed time by all attacking units.

**6-52.** Light infantry units should move by tactical vehicles to the maximum extent possible to avoid prematurely exhausting their soldiers. However, light infantry forces should not travel too far forward in tactical vehicles. The enemy can detect the noise and other battlefield signatures associated with the use of tactical vehicles at a greater distance than he can detect dismounted infantry soldiers and will probably respond to the presence of tactical vehicles with direct and indirect fire systems directed against these vulnerable targets. The commander must weigh the need for security against the time required to conduct a foot march and its resulting effects on soldiers.

**6-53.** Units move rapidly through their attack positions and across the LD, which should be controlled by friendly forces. A unit uses its designated attack position only by exception when it is necessary to refuel or conditions required to support the planned maneuver are not yet established. A unit does not occupy its attack positions for more than ten to fifteen minutes without initiating actions to protect itself and increase its survivability, such as deploying local security and camouflage nets and starting the construction of fighting and survivability positions. If necessary, a unit can use guides

to assist in occupying the attack position. These guides may come from organic resources or from another unit.

**6-54.** For units attacking on foot using infiltration and stealth, a commander may designate a point of departure for the attacking units instead of an LD. Armor and mechanized infantry units normally use gaps or lanes through the friendly positions to allow them to deploy into combat formations before they cross the LD.

**6-55.** Preliminary operations for an attack may include the use of preparatory fires, and the relief of units in contact by executing a relief in place or a forward passage of lines. The relief of units may be desirable to continue the momentum of the attack with fresh troops, change the direction of the attack, exploit a weakness in the enemy position with reserve forces, or initiate an offensive on a stabilized front. (Chapter 15 details a relief in place. Chapter 16 details a forward passage of lines.)

**6-56.** The commander uses available artillery, mortar, close air support (CAS), and offensive information operations to conduct preparatory fires. Preparatory fires are developed from the top-down with bottom-up refinement. The subordinate commander most affected by the effects of these preparatory fires must strongly emphasize the bottom-up refinement process. Preparatory fires can accomplish the following functions:

- Destroy the enemy.
- Suppress, neutralize, or disrupt high-value or high-priority targets.
- Gain fire superiority.
- Suppress the enemy in his defensive positions.
- Facilitate the attacking force's maneuver.
- Deceive the enemy.

**6-57.** If the attacking forces are in contact with the enemy's security zone, preparatory fires may initially destroy or disrupt only the enemy's reconnaissance and security forces and positions. In either case, counterfires and counterbattery fires conducted as part of preparatory fires serve to degrade the enemy's fire support systems and assist in achieving fire superiority.

**6-58.** The commander ensures that his maneuver forces have the CS and CSS assets necessary to conduct the operation and continue the momentum of the attack as part of the preparation process. That support effort must anticipate future maneuvers to ensure the uninterrupted sustainment of the maneuver force.

## EXECUTION OF AN ATTACK

**6-59.** A series of advances and assaults by attacking units until they secure the final objective characterizes the attack. Commanders at all levels must use their initiative to rapidly shift their decisive operations as necessary to take advantage of opportunities and momentum to ensure the enemy's rapid destruction. Attacking units move as quickly as possible, following reconnaissance elements or successful probes through gaps in the enemy's defenses. They shift their strength to reinforce success and carry the battle deep into the enemy's sustainment areas. A commander does not delay his attack to preserve the alignment of subordinate units or to adhere closely to the preconceived plan of attack. This manual discusses the execution of the attack in a five-step sequence:

- Gain and Maintain Enemy Contract.
- Disrupt the Enemy.
- Fix the Enemy.
- Maneuver
- Follow Through.

This sequence is for discussion purposes only. The reader should understand that these sequences overlap during the conduct of an attack.

**6-60.** The commander must avoid becoming so committed to the initial decisive operation that he neglects opportunities. He must be prepared to abandon failed attacks and to exploit any unanticipated successes or enemy errors by designating another unit as the decisive operation in response to the changing situation.

**6-61.** When maneuvering his force, the commander strives to retain freedom of action while protecting his force. Although he may have a detailed plan to defeat the enemy, he continually seeks any opportunity to strike the enemy to defeat, destroy, or reduce his combat power or shatter his cohesion and will to fight. The commander avoids dogged adherence to a plan no longer appropriate to current battlefield conditions. The difference between success and failure in combat often depends upon the commander's ability to make the plan fit existing circumstances rather than trying to make circumstances fit the plan.

**6-62.** The commander must assume that the enemy possesses, in at least limited quantities, the same limited-visibility observation capabilities as his own forces — absent positive information to the contrary — when conducting a limited-visibility attack. The use of terrain to mask movement and deployment remains critical because limited visibility may create a false sense of protection from enemy observation. During



movement, leaders reduce the distances between vehicles or individual soldiers as necessary to allow one system or soldier to observe the other. This decreases the time necessary to react to enemy contact. The attacking force wants to maintain its momentum, therefore, it does not preserve the alignment of units within the selected combat formation at the expense of additional time. However, it must adhere more closely to the plan of attack than under daylight conditions.

#### **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**6-63.** Gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy when he is determined to break that contact is vital to the success of offensive operations. A defending enemy generally establishes a security area around his forces to make early contact with the attacking forces to determine their capabilities, intent, and chosen course of action and to delay their approach. The enemy commander wants to use his security area to strip away friendly reconnaissance forces and hide his dispositions, capabilities, and intent. His goal is to compel the attacking force to conduct a movement to contact against his forces that know the exact location of the attacking forces. Field Manuals 100-60 through 100-64 describe how different types of enemy forces conduct security and defensive operations.

**6-64.** A commander uses his situational understanding to employ his combat assets against enemy forces. However, echelons below division do not normally have the detection, tracking, and weapon systems necessary to conduct either decisive or shaping operations directed against enemy forces not currently committed to close combat.

**6-65.** The manner in which a unit gains and maintains contact depends on whether the unit is in contact with the enemy's security zone or the enemy's main line of resistance and the echelon of the unit in the nested layers of reconnaissance and security. For example, the intent of the corps' reconnaissance effort is to determine the dispositions, composition, direction of movement, and rate of movement of the enemy's significant forces. The corps' armored cavalry regiment, acting as a covering force or advance guard, can fight through a security zone, develop the situation, confirm information provided by technical means, and force the enemy to reveal more information than could be acquired solely through the use of intelligence sensors. This additional information includes locating the enemy's reserve. At a lower level, a battalion constituting the advance guard of the main body can use its scout platoon to conduct a zone reconnaissance that focuses on acquiring updates of enemy positions and obstacles.

**6-66.** The commander's ability to sense the enemy's actions by gaining and maintaining contact with all significant parts of the enemy force, to include tracking enemy reserves, fire support, and follow-on forces, increases the security of the attacking force. The enemy's attempts to shift major elements of his forces or launch a counterattack will be detected. Additionally, by sending out a force to conduct area reconnaissance with an on-order mission to be prepared to conduct a security mission, the commander can prevent enemy reconnaissance assets from detecting the friendly force's major movements and increase the enemy's risk. This increased risk tends to slow down the enemy commander's tempo of operations as he tries to locate the main body of the attacking force. The combination of these factors results in providing the attacking commander with additional time to take advantage of the changing situation.

#### **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

**6-67.** Disrupting one or more parts of the enemy's combined arms team weakens the enemy's entire force and allows the friendly commander to attack the remaining enemy force in an asymmetrical manner. The decisions regarding what to disrupt, when to disrupt, and to what end are critical. For example, the goal of disrupting the enemy's fire support system is to allow friendly forces to maneuver and mass the effects of their weapon systems against the enemy without being engaged by the enemy's indirect fire weapons. Attacking forces can accomplish this by attacking enemy forward observers, fire direction centers, command posts, artillery and rocket systems, or their ammunition supply. Each set of targets requires a different amount of resources. The probability of success, the effectiveness of the attack, and the time necessary to achieve the desired target effects varies with each set of targets.

**6-68.** Once any type of contact — even sensor contact — is made with the enemy, the commander wants to use the element of surprise to conduct shaping operations that strike at the enemy and disrupt both the enemy's combined arms team and his ability to plan and control his forces. Once this disruption process begins, it continues throughout the attack. The commander uses any existing technological advantage over the enemy in the following areas to aid the disruption process:

- Firepower and lethality.
- Range.
- Protection.
- Battlefield mobility.
- Intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Command and control systems.

**6-69.** Whatever form the disruption process takes, it assists the commander to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative; maintain his freedom of action; impose his will on the enemy; set the terms and select the place for battle; exploit enemy vulnerabilities; and react to changing situations and unexpected developments more rapidly than the enemy. This disruption effort usually occurs at division level and above because lower echelons lack the necessary reconnaissance, target acquisition, intelligence analysis, and target attack assets to engage forces not committed to close combat.

**6-70.** The commander plans his shaping operations to occur at the place and time necessary to establish the conditions for his decisive operations. Targets of a shaping operation may include: enemy C<sup>2</sup> facilities, RSI assets, fire support systems, reserves, and logistics support. If a commander executes a shaping operation too early, the enemy has time to recover and respond before his forces conducting the decisive operation can complete their maneuver.

**6-71.** The commander plans to use harassing, suppressive, or interdiction fires against positions likely to contain high-value targets to disrupt enemy reactions to the attacking unit's advance. These fires deny the enemy unrestricted use of the terrain and can prevent the enemy's reserves from entering the fight before the unit seizes the objective. Additional benefits may result from these fires over time to include increased psychological pressure on enemy forces and a reduction in their mental and physical capabilities by disrupting their sleep and rest patterns.

**6-72.** Surprise denies the enemy the opportunity to focus and synchronize his combat power against the attacking force. It prevents the enemy from massing his forces or fires at a critical, possibly decisive, place and time. In place of cohesive resistance, surprise can produce confusion, fear, and piecemeal resistance. Factors that contribute to surprise include: the speed and intensity in executing the attack plan and employing unexpected factors, such as the selection of a less than optimal course of action, variations in tactics and methods of operation, deception operations, and operations security, .

#### **FIX THE ENEMY**

**6-73.** War is a contest between thinking opponents; the enemy will oppose the friendly commander's actions. Every friendly move causes the enemy to attempt to counter that move. The commander does everything in his power to limit the options available to his opponent. Fixing an enemy into a given position or a course of action and controlling his movements limit his options to reduce the amount of uncertainty on the battlefield.

**6-74.** In turn, reducing uncertainty allows the friendly force to use maneuver to mass the effects of overwhelming combat power against a portion of the enemy. It gives the commander more time to modify his plan as necessary and orchestrate the employment of his forces. It allows him to mass forces in one place through the use of economy of force measures in other areas. The commander may also try to fix an enemy unit, such as the enemy reserve or follow-on force, to prevent it from repositioning or maneuvering against the commander's decisive operation.

**6-75.** A primary goal of fixing the enemy is to isolate the objective of the decisive operation to prevent the enemy from maneuvering to reinforce the unit targeted for destruction. One method of isolating the objective is to conduct a shaping operation using lethal and nonlethal fires. Lethal fires may range from sniper fire to a joint fire plan designed to totally destroy a selected portion of the enemy force. Nonlethal fires, such as electronic jamming, can prevent the enemy from receiving orders or vital intelligence and combat information.

**6-76.** Severing enemy lines of communication over prolonged periods of time through the use of interdiction measures is another way to fix the enemy. These measures can range from air interdiction that destroys bridges and rail switching yards to ambushes conducted by infiltrating combat patrols.

**6-77.** Another method of fixing the enemy is to tie obstacles into the existing terrain to canalize and slow the movement of enemy reserves. At lower tactical echelons, scatterable minefields can seal the objectives from possible enemy reinforcement or counterattacks and neutralize enemy actions to the flanks. Deception operations and activities, such as demonstrations and false preparatory fires, can fix the enemy. The use of extensive smoke screens and vehicle mock-ups in a deception effort can also assist in fixing an enemy force.

**6-78.** Fixing the enemy must be done with the minimum amount of force. The commander normally allocates the bulk of his combat power to the decisive operation, so fixing operations are, by necessity, usually economy of force operations. Therefore, the commander must carefully consider what enemy elements to fix and target only those elements that can significantly affect the outcome of the fight. The longer the requirement to fix these forces, the more resources the commander needs to accomplish the mission. Generally, an enemy force only needs to be fixed until it cannot respond to the decisive operation in time to affect the outcome. This may require a commander to

slow down the rate of march of an enemy unit to prevent it from influencing the outcome of the engagement or battle.

## MANEUVER

**6-79.** The commander focuses on seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative during the attack. He should avoid putting the strength of his attack against the enemy's defensive strength. Instead, he should employ tactics that defeat the enemy by attacking through a point of relative weakness, such as a flank or rear.

**6-80.** Offensive maneuver seeks to achieve a decisive massing of effects on one objective, or on several objectives if adequate combat power is available for simultaneous decisive operations. The commander seeks an advantage at the point of his decisive operation by:

- Taking maximum advantage of dead space and covered and concealed routes to close with the enemy.
- Using his advantages in the effective ranges of weapon systems.
- Repositioning friendly forces rapidly.
- Navigating accurately cross country.
- Obtaining situational understanding of friendly and enemy locations.
- Taking effective security measures.

**6-81.** The key to success is to strike hard and fast, overwhelm a portion of the enemy force, and then quickly transition to the next objective or phase, thus maintaining the momentum of the attack without letting up on the pressure. The commander must retain freedom of maneuver with multiple courses of action throughout the operation. Additionally, he must make every effort to locate and track enemy reserve and follow-on forces, which prevents friendly forces from being attacked unexpectedly by significant enemy forces. This allows the commander time to delay, disrupt, or destroy these enemy forces before they can interfere with the attack.

**6-82.** The maneuver process normally follows this sequence:

- Movement from the LD to the PLD.
- Actions at the PLD, assault position, or FCL.
- Breaching operations (discussed in FM 90-13-1.)
- Actions on the objective.

**6-83.** Depending on the conditions of METT-TC, artillery and mortars may advance with the attacking formation or move forward by bounds. The echelon fire support coordinators (FSCOORDs) position direct support and reinforcing artillery in coordination with their maneuver commanders. The force field artillery headquarters, normally a division or corps artillery headquarters, coordinates position areas for general support and general support-reinforcing artillery units through the fire support

officers at corps, division, and brigade. The commander considers the maneuver of fire support assets along with maneuver forces to ensure that proper fire support is available at all times.

#### **Movement from the LD to the PLD**

**6-84.** Once the attacking unit crosses the LD, it moves aggressively and as quickly as the terrain and enemy situation allow. It moves forward using appropriate movement techniques assisted by the fires of supporting units. Fire and movement are closely integrated and coordinated. Effective suppressive fires facilitate movement, and movement facilitates more effective fires. Whenever possible, the attacking unit uses avenues of approach that avoid strong enemy defensive positions, takes advantage of all available cover and concealment, and places the unit on the flanks and rear of the defending enemy. Where cover and concealment are not available, the unit uses obscurants to conceal its movement. Any delays in establishing obscuration and suppressive fires prior to crossing the PLD may require the attacking unit to occupy its assault positions.

**6-85.** Artillery and other fire support assets move as necessary to ensure that the attacking unit remains within supporting range. Previously conducted analysis of the time it takes to move from the LD to the PLD and the distances involved ensures that fire support systems are emplaced and prepared to provide fire support before maneuver units move inside the effective range of enemy weapon systems.

**6-86.** If the commander expects to make enemy contact at or shortly beyond the LD, he deploys his unit so that he can maintain maximum fire power against the enemy's known positions. He chooses the combat formation that best balances firepower, speed, security, and control in the specific situation. The commander has the option of deploying a security force in front of his attacking unit. He may also employ a flank or rear security force if required by the enemy situation. The commander may not want to change formations during his attack because of the potential loss of momentum resulting from such changes. If the commander finds it necessary to transition from one combat formation to another, he should base the transition on thoroughly trained drills. Once enemy contact is expected, he transitions to the bounding overwatch technique of movement. (Movement techniques are addressed in Chapter 14.)

**6-87.** Between the LD and the PLD, the attacking unit secures intermediate objectives only to eliminate enemy positions or bring additional suppressive fires to bear. Fire support assets engage targets of opportunity. The commander uses close air support and

artillery to destroy enemy security forces. As the unit approaches suspected enemy positions or danger areas, the commander directs his forces to occupy predesignated support-by-fire positions. Fire support, suppression, and obscuration are key enablers that allow a force to occupy these positions. Commanders use fires from these positions to suppress enemy forces while the unit continues its advance toward the objective.

**6-88.** The commander engages known enemy forces with the maximum possible combat power to overwhelm them as quickly as possible. The attacking unit that encounters small enemy units on the way to the objective either quickly overruns or bypasses them if they meet the bypass criteria. The attacking unit then reports the location of bypassed enemy elements to its higher headquarters and maintains contact until they can be handed off to follow and support forces. The commander uses minimal force to maintain that contact to avoid significantly weakening the decisive operation.

#### **Actions at the PLD, Assault Position, or FCL**

**6-89.** The attacking unit maintains the pace of its advance as it approaches its PLD. The attacking unit splits into one or more assault and support forces once it reaches the PLD if not previously completed. At the PLD infantry soldiers dismount from their infantry fighting vehicles as required by the situation. All forces supporting the assault force should be set in their support-by-fire positions before the assault force crosses the PLD. The commander uses his unit's tactical SOP, prearranged signals, engagement areas (EAs), and target reference points (TRPs) to control the direct fires from these supporting positions. He employs restricted fire lines between converging forces.

**6-90.** The PLD can be co-located with the assault position. The commander ensures that the final preparations of his breach force in an assault position do not delay its maneuver to the point of breach as soon as the conditions are set. Whenever possible, the assault force rapidly passes through the assault position. It may have to halt in the assault position while fires are lifted and shifted. In this case, if the enemy anticipates the assault, the assault force deploys into covered positions, screens its positions with smoke, and waits for the order to assault. As long as the assault force remains in the assault position, support forces continue their suppressive fires on the objective.

**6-91.** Once conditions are set by the support force, the breach force reduces, proofs, and marks the required number of lanes through the enemy's tactical obstacles to support the maneuver of the assault force. From the PLD, the assault force maneuvers against or around the enemy to take advantage of the support force's efforts to suppress the targeted enemy positions. The support force employs direct and indirect fires against the selected

enemy positions to destroy, suppress, obscure, or neutralize enemy weapons and cover the assault force's movement. The assault force must closely follow these supporting fires to gain ground with the least number of casualties.

**6-92.** The key to forward movement when the assault force is under enemy direct fire is to return effective fire, which prevents the enemy from firing effectively at the moving assault force. Destructive or suppressive fires are most effective when fired by the stationary support force. These fires prevent the enemy from firing effectively at the moving assault force. Once the support force is in position and the assault force is prepared to move, the support force places a heavy volume of fire on the enemy to destroy, neutralize, or suppress him. Once it suppresses the enemy position, it reduces its rate of fire. When the assault force nears its objective, the support force increases its rate of fire to ensure the continued suppression of the enemy. This allows the assault force to assault the position before the enemy can react. Either on signal or when the assault begins, the support force ceases fire, shifts its fire to another target area, or walks its fire across the objective in front of the assault force.

**6-93.** The use of smoke conceals units and individual weapons. It degrades enemy laser designators, range finders, and directed energy weapons. If possible during the assault, the commander uses obscuration to blind the enemy and screen friendly movement onto the objective. Obscuration is placed in front of enemy positions, on the far side of obstacles, and in areas that restrict maneuver. The commander may use a smoke haze over rear areas to limit enemy observation.

#### **Actions on the Objective**

**6-94.** The effects of the overwhelming and simultaneous application of fire, movement, and shock action characterize the final assault. This violent assault destroys or drives the enemy from the objective area. Small units conduct the final assault while operating under the control of the appropriate echelon command post. Heavy forces have the options of conducting this final assault in either a mounted or dismounted configuration.

**6-95.** The commander employs all fire support means to destroy and suppress the enemy and sustain the momentum of the attack. By carefully synchronizing indirect fire systems and projecting their desired effects, the commander improves the likelihood of success. He plans fires in series or groups to support maneuver against enemy forces on or near the geographical objective. As the commander shifts artillery fires and obscurants from the objective to other targets, the assault element moves rapidly across the objective. The support element must not allow its suppressive fires to lapse. These



fires isolate the objective and prevent the enemy from reinforcing or counterattacking. They also destroy escaping enemy forces and systems. The commander employs offensive information operations, such as electronic warfare, to attack enemy command and control nodes as part of this effort.

**6-96.** Supporting artillery may need to displace forward during the attack to ensure maximum support is available for the assault. However, changes in position are held to a minimum because they reduce the volume of available fire support. The commander balances the need to maintain that amount of fire support against the enemy's counterbattery capabilities with the need to provide continued coverage as the attacking unit continues to move forward. Fire support assets supporting the attacking unit move into their new positions one subordinate unit at a time, by echelon, to maintain fire support to the attack.

**6-97.** Small enemy units moving toward the penetrated area can disrupt the synchronization of this final assault. As small units and weapon systems crews become engaged, they tend to focus on their immediate opponent rather than the overall situation. Loss of situational awareness, combined with the enemy's more detailed knowledge of the terrain, allows small enemy forces to inflict a great deal of damage on the attacking force. The attacking unit's leaders must understand the flow of combat and retain the capability to engage these enemy forces before they can decisively alter the outcome of the assault. The commander can commit his reserve to maintain the attack's momentum and to keep relentless pressure on the enemy. This action also hinders enemy attempts to stabilize the situation.

**6-98.** Against a well-prepared, integrated enemy defense, the commander must isolate and destroy portions of the enemy defense in sequence. (See Figures 6-2 and 6-3.) His forces must isolate, suppress, obscure, and bypass selected enemy positions. For example, smoke delivered by field artillery and mortars in front of the objective — between the force and the enemy — screens friendly movement and obscures the enemy's weapon systems. Fires placed on and beyond the flanks of the objective serve to isolate the enemy position. These fires include: smoke, high explosives, improved conventional munitions, and precision-guided munitions delivered by a mix of field artillery, fixed-wing aviation assets, and direct-fire attack helicopters. In addition, the commander may employ short-duration scatterable mines in conjunction with terminally guided munitions to help isolate and impair the enemy's ability to counterattack. (Their use must not impede the commander's conduct of exploitation and pursuit operations.)

Jamming can be used to cut C<sup>2</sup> links between enemy maneuver forces and their supporting artillery.

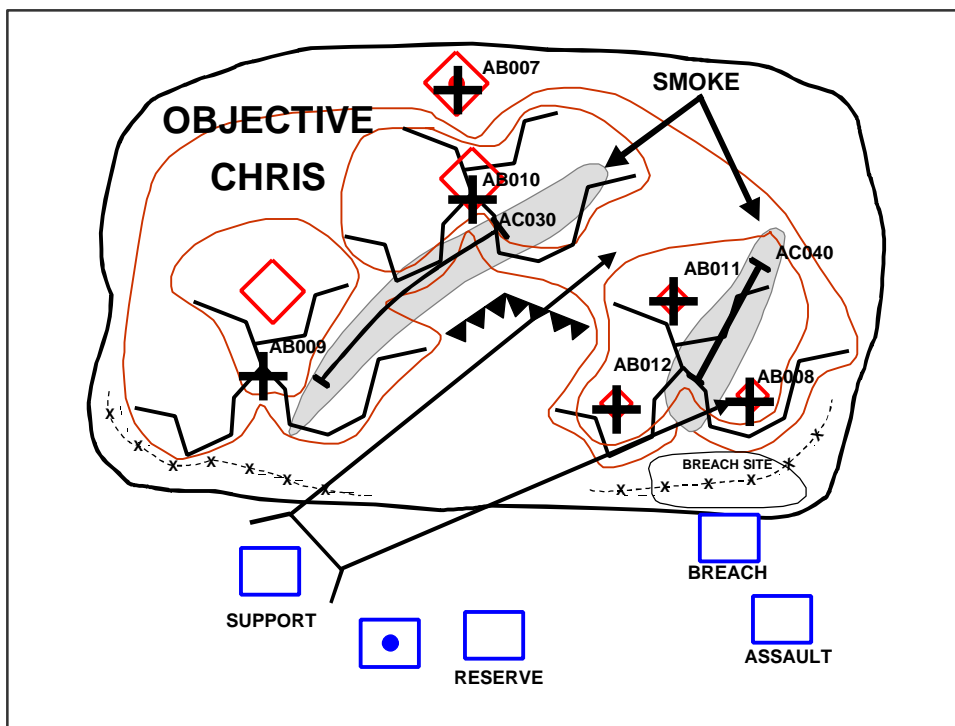


Figure 6-2. Attack of an Objective: the Breach

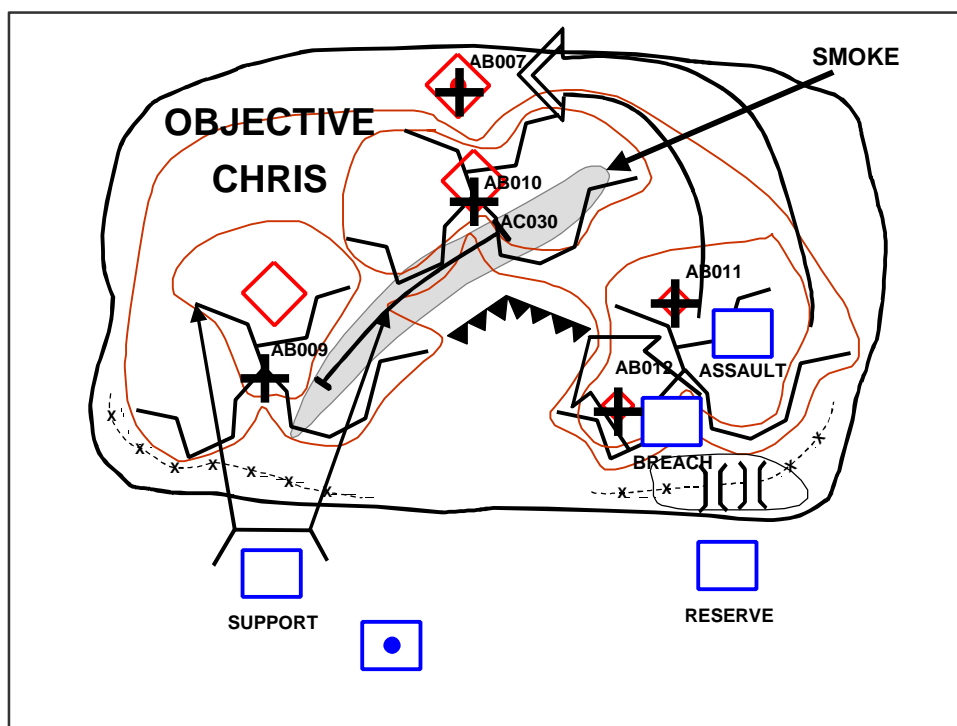


Figure 6-3. Attack of an Objective: the Assault

*Mounted Assault*

**6-100.** In determining whether to conduct a mounted or dismounted attack, the commander considers the primary factors of the terrain, obstacles, and the strength of enemy antiarmor defenses. Mounted assaults accelerate the execution of the operation by allowing the greatest speed and shock action and providing the best protection against small arms and indirect fires while conserving the strength of the infantry soldiers conducting the assault.

**6-101.** When facing weak, hastily prepared, disorganized resistance, or when attacking with overwhelming combat power in relation to enemy forces on the objective, a heavy force commander can conduct a mounted assault. The commander conducting a mounted assault concentrates all of his supporting fires to destroy and neutralize the enemy and fix local reserves. Weapons with the greatest accuracy and smallest bursting radius, such as tank and infantry fighting vehicle cannons, should continue to fire for the longest amount of time. As the fires from one type of weapon is lifted or shifted, other weapons increase their rate of fire. The assault force advances close to its objective under the cover of these supporting fires.

**6-102.** The assault force attacks, using shock action, aided by the firepower of organic systems, to rapidly overrun the hostile position as soon as the commander shifts his supporting fires beyond the objective. Tanks and infantry fighting vehicles with their hatches closed to provide armor protection to all vehicle crews conduct the assault. Mechanized infantry elements move as close to the objective as is possible while remaining mounted in their infantry fighting vehicles. When the danger to the mounted infantry elements exceeds the protection offered by their combat vehicle, the infantry elements dismount from their carriers and begin clearing the objective immediately after the fires are lifted or shifted.

**6-103.** If the mission involves clearing the objective, once the position is overrun, accompanying mechanized infantry soldiers dismount from their vehicles on the far side of the objective and sweep the objective from the far side back to the near side to clear any remaining pockets of resistance. The ability of heavy forces to closely follow friendly mortar and artillery fires as they shift across the objective is a major advantage. Any delay in launching the assault after the commander shifts the supporting fires allows the enemy time to move from his protective positions to his firing positions

*Dismounted Assault*

**6-104.** A heavy force commander usually conducts a dismounted assault when any of the following conditions apply:

- The enemy is in prepared positions.
- The enemy has a strong antiarmor capability.
- Tanks are not available to lead the assault.
- Terrain favors dismounted operations.
- Obstacles prevent maneuver across the objective.
- Stealth is required to close on the objective.
- A mounted assault stalls on or short of the objective.

Based on his analysis of the factors of METT-TC and the degree of risk he is willing to accept, the commander determines if, when, and where any mechanized infantry forces in the assault force will dismount from their infantry fighting vehicles.

*Consolidation*

**6-105. Consolidation is the process of organizing and strengthening a newly captured position so that it can be defended.** Normally, the attacking unit tries to exploit its success regardless of the type of the assault. In some situations, however, the unit may have to consolidate its gains. Consolidation may vary from a rapid repositioning of forces and security elements on the objective, to a reorganization of the attacking force, to the organization and detailed improvement of the position for defense. Actions taken to consolidate gains include: eliminating enemy pockets of resistance, establishing security, positioning forces to enable them to conduct a hasty defense, fire planning, conducting reconnaissance, and preparing for potential additional missions.

**6-106.** Immediately after the assault, the commander must maintain contact with those enemy forces that have abandoned the objective. If he has destroyed all enemy forces on the objective, he takes those actions necessary to regain contact with the enemy. The commander sends out patrols in any direction required to maintain or regain contact with the enemy within his AO.

**6-107.** The commander also dispatches patrols to ensure contact with any adjacent friendly units. A unit is normally responsible for establishing contact with the units to its front and right as defined by the direction to the enemy. Unless a commander knows that units to his left and rear are preparing to make contact, he takes actions to initiate that contact. Otherwise, a dangerous gap could occur, which the enemy could exploit during a counterattack.

**6-108.** The task of establishing security is accomplished as soon as the force occupies the objective. Each subordinate element establishes observation posts (OPs) that monitor likely enemy avenues of approach and conduct other security operations. Units must remain aware that the enemy will have defensive fires planned on his former positions.

**6-109.** Once subordinate units are on the objective, they occupy firing positions to prepare for an enemy counterattack. Normally, an attacking unit does not occupy vacated enemy positions because the enemy is familiar with, and normally targets, them. Therefore, the attacking unit should position itself away from established enemy positions. This positioning is also important because the unit will need to orient on different avenues of approach and in a different direction. The commander positions his armored and antitank systems to cover likely enemy mounted avenues of approach. Mechanized infantry forces normally dismount and orient along likely dismounted and mounted infantry avenues of approach. Overwatching forces, such as antitank systems, orient along likely mounted avenues of approach. Mortars, command posts, and combat service support assets move forward to assist in the consolidation. The commander should preplan the location and future missions of each element. Artillery and other fire support systems mass fires on enemy assembly areas and troops forming for counterattacks. The commander may alert his reserve to protect the flanks of the attacking units, to hold ground seized by them, or to counter an enemy counterattack. The commander may use antitank minefields or other obstacles to cover likely enemy avenues of approach. As the unit has time and resources, it improves these obstacles and defensive positions.

**6-110.** The commander normally designates target reference points, final protective fires, engagement areas, and other direct and indirect fire control measures as part of the consolidation process. Once in position, subordinate elements modify preplanned measures and improve the position's defensive capabilities as required. As local security is being established, the commander directs subordinate elements to conduct mounted or dismounted patrols along likely enemy avenues of approach. The echelon scout or cavalry unit deploys beyond these local security patrols to conduct its assigned reconnaissance mission.

#### *Reorganization*

**6-111.** Reorganization includes all measures taken by the commander to maintain the combat effectiveness of his unit or return it to a specified level of combat capability.

Any reorganization actions not completed during the conduct of the attack are accomplished during consolidation. These actions include:

- Replacing key personnel lost before or during the battle.
- Reporting unit location and status to keep the next higher commander informed; digitized units can do this automatically.
- Recovering and evacuating casualties, prisoners of war, and damaged equipment in accordance with its SOP.
- Redistributing supplies, ammunition, and equipment as necessary. It resupplies its basic loads of ammunition, fuel, and repair parts as time permits.
- Integrating replacement soldiers and systems into the unit.
- Revising communication plans as required. The unit places its C<sup>2</sup> facilities in position to conduct further operations and control the consolidation.
- Reestablishing unit cohesion.
- Conducting essential training, such as training replacements on the unit's SOP.

#### **FOLLOW THROUGH**

**6-112.** After seizing the objective, the commander has two alternatives: exploit success and continue the attack or terminate the offensive operation. At brigade echelon and below, the unit maintains contact and attempts to exploit its success. Normally, a division or corps commander makes the decision regarding whether to initiate a general, as opposed to local, exploitation or pursuit or terminate offensive actions.

**6-113.** After seizing an objective, the most likely on-order mission is to continue the attack. During consolidation, the commander and his staff continue troop-leading procedures in preparation for any on-order missions assigned by a higher headquarters. They use available combat information and intelligence products to adjust contingency plans. During the conduct of the attack, they continue reconnaissance- and intelligence-gathering for on-order missions and continue to refine the plan.

**6-114.** Artillery displaces forward when required if road conditions, ammunition supply, and enemy action permit. Force support assets move quickly to take advantage of the natural reduction in support requirements that occur in the time period between when a position is taken and the enemy can organize a counterattack to provide depth to a defense. Another result of this forward movement is the positioning of fire support assets where they can support a renewal of the attack.

**6-115.** The commander attempts to exploit the deterioration of the enemy position by administering quick and powerful blows before the enemy can reconstitute his defense. The use of mass quantities of precision-guided munitions combined with the action of large, heavy formations and air support may prove decisive.

**6-116.** Ordinarily, the enemy attempts to hold his position until nightfall and complete his withdrawal under cover of darkness. The attacking unit maintains relentless pressure, continuing the attack at night. Through these attacks, the unit maintains contact with the enemy, keeps him off balance, and makes his withdrawal from action extremely difficult. If the enemy tries to delay, the unit continues its attack, concentrating its efforts toward enveloping or encircling the retrograding enemy force if the enemy is too strong to overrun. An attack pushed aggressively through the hostile front may isolate major elements and force the enemy to evacuate the entire defensive position before he can construct a viable fall-back position.

**6-117.** During the conduct of a successful penetration, attacking units penetrate deeper into the hostile position to attack enemy reserves, artillery, and C<sup>2</sup> centers. Either the assault or a support unit attacks the enemy's newly exposed flanks to widen the gap. The commander sends mobile forces through the gap to exploit the advantages gained, attack the enemy from the rear, or prevent his escape. At this time, the commander's force multipliers — such as fixed-wing aviation — concentrate on supporting the ground force exploiting the penetration.

**6-118.** As part of the follow-through to the attack, the commander plans to transition to a pursuit or an exploitation to deny the enemy a chance to reorganize and stabilize his situation or conduct a major counterattack. Furthermore, the commander must use his force without overextending its logistics capabilities. The commander must plan to have fresh units pass around or through forward units when it is necessary to sustain the momentum of the attack. He may assign these fresh units the task of follow and support or follow and assume in an effort to maintain the tempo of the attack. Appendix B discusses both tasks in greater detail.

**6-119.** If the attacking unit is transitioning to a pursuit or an exploitation, it may have to bypass enemy units to maintain the operational tempo. Units bypass enemy forces according to the previously established bypass criteria. As a minimum, the bypassed force is left under observation or fixed in place by other units.

**6-120.** If the enemy succeeds in withdrawing his major forces from action, the commander intensifies reconnaissance to obtain the information necessary to decide on a course of action. Aggressive action may prevent the enemy from reconstituting his defense in a rearward position. The commander may have to delay the renewal of his attack until the completion of additional reconnaissance so he can formulate a tactically sound plan if the enemy succeeds in occupying new defensive positions.

## UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS OF EACH FORM OF ATTACK

**6-121.** The commander can launch an attack to achieve different results or for different purposes. These subordinate forms of an attack are:

- Ambush.
- Counterattack.
- Demonstration.
- Feint.
- Raid.
- Spoiling attack.

The commander's intent and the factors of METT-TC determine the specific form of attack. As attack forms, they share many of the planning, preparation, and execution considerations of the offense. This section discusses the unique considerations of each form of attack. Demonstrations and feints, while forms of attack, are also associated with military deception operations.

### AMBUSH

**6-122. An ambush is a surprise attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy.** It may include an assault to close with and destroy the engaged enemy force. In an ambush, ground objectives do not have to be seized and held.

**6-123.** The two types of ambush are point ambush and area ambush. In a point ambush, a unit deploys to attack a single kill zone. In an area ambush, a unit deploys into two or more related point ambushes. An area ambush is not normally conducted by a unit smaller than a platoon.

**6-124.** Ambushes are categorized as either hasty or deliberate but take place along a continuum. A hasty ambush is an immediate reaction to an unexpected opportunity conducted using SOPs and battle drill. A deliberate ambush is planned as a specific action against a specific target. Detailed information about

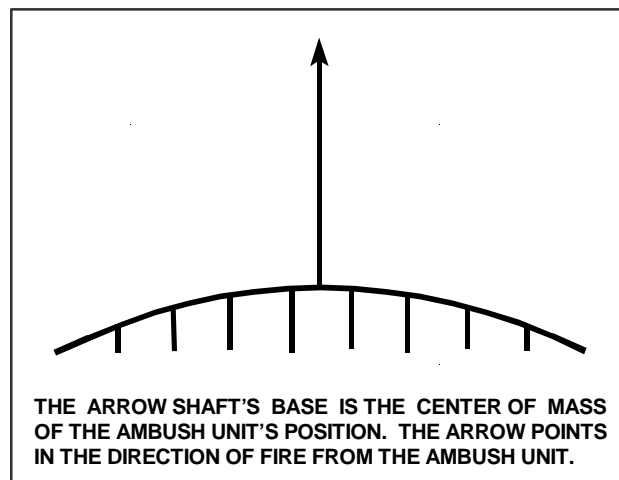


Figure 6-4. Ambush Tactical Mission Graphic



the target, such as size, organization, and weapons and equipment carried; route and direction of movement; and times the target will reach or pass certain points on its route may be available. Heavy or light forces may conduct an ambush. Figure 6-4 shows the tactical mission graphic for an ambush.

**6-125.** The typical goal of the ambush force is the death or capture of all enemy personnel located within the kill zone. Another goal could be to destroy certain designated vehicles, such as all missile transporter-erector launchers. Ideally, the ambush force can destroy the ambushed enemy so quickly that he is unable to report the engagement while the ambush force accomplishes its mission.

### Organization of Forces

**6-126.** A typical ambush is organized into three elements: assault, support, and security. The assault element fires into the kill zone. Its goal is to destroy the enemy force. When used, the assault force attacks into and clears the kill zone and may be assigned additional tasks, to include searching for items of intelligence value, capturing prisoners, and completing the destruction of enemy equipment to preclude its immediate reuse. The support element supports the assault element by firing into and around the kill zone and provides the ambush's primary killing power. The support element attempts to destroy the majority of enemy combat power before the assault element moves into the objective or kill zone. The security element provides early warning of the arrival of any enemy relief force and security for the remaining the ambush force. It secures the objective rally point (ORP) and blocks enemy avenues of approach into and out of the ambush site, which prevents the enemy from entering or leaving.

### Planning an Ambush

**6-127.** Planning considerations for an ambush include —

- A “no-later-than” time to establish the ambush.
- A tentative ambush formation or, for an area ambush, element locations.
- A forward passage of lines and movement to the ambush site in tactical formation.
- Location of a rally point where the ambush force can reassemble and reorganize if required.
- Actions if the ambush is prematurely detected.
- A scheme of maneuver that maximizes engagement of the enemy's flank or rear, provides early warning of target approach, includes assault element actions in the kill zone, and details how the ambush element displaces from the ambush site.
- Insertion routes, actions at the objective, and exit routes.

- A fire support plan that integrates the direct fire and obstacle plans, which results in the enemy's isolation, inflicts maximum damage, and also supports forces in the rally point.
- The criteria for initiating the ambush; for example, only engage enemy formations of the same or smaller size and withhold fire until the target moves into the kill zone.
- Any required changes to the ambushing unit's fire distribution standing operating procedures (SOP) based upon the factors of METT-TC.
- Obstacles to augment the effects of the friendly fire.
- Rear security measures.

**6-128.** A point ambush usually employs a line or an L-shaped formation. The names of these formations describe deployment of the support element around the kill zone. The kill zone is that part of an ambush site where fire is concentrated to isolate, trap, and destroy the enemy. The ambush formation is important because it determines whether a point ambush can deliver the heavy volume of fire necessary to isolate and destroy the target. The commander determines the formation to use based on the advantages and disadvantages of each formation in relation to the factors of METT-TC.

**6-129.** The assault and support elements generally deploy parallel to the target's route of movement — the long axis of the kill zone — which subjects the target to flanking fire in the line formation. The size of the target that can be trapped in the kill zone is limited by the size of the area that can be covered by the support element's weapons. Existing natural, manmade, and military obstacles, reinforced with tactical obstacles integrated with direct and indirect fires, traps the target in the kill zone. A disadvantage of the line formation is that the target may be so dispersed that it is larger than the kill zone.

**6-130.** The line formation is effective in close terrain, which restricts the target's movement, and in open terrain, where one flank is blocked by existing or reinforcing obstacles. The commander may place similar obstacles between the assault and support elements and the kill zone to protect the ambush force from the target's counterambush drills. When the ambush force deploys in a line formation, it leaves access lanes through these protective obstacles so that it can assault the target. An advantage of the line formation is that it is relatively easy to control under all conditions of visibility.

**6-131.** The L-shaped formation is a variation of the line formation. The long leg of the "L" (assault element) is parallel to the kill zone and provides flanking fire. An advantage of the "L" formation is that the short leg (support element) is at the end of the kill zone and at a right angle to it and blocks the enemy's forward movement. It also provides enfilading fire that interlocks with fire from the other leg. The commander can

employ a L-shaped formation on a straight stretch of trail, road, stream, or at a sharp bend.

**6-132.** An area ambush is most effective when enemy movement is largely restricted to trails or roads. The area selected should offer several suitable point ambush sites. The commander selects a central ambush site around which he can organize outlying ambushes. Once he selects his site, he must determine the enemy's possible avenues of approach and escape routes. He assigns outlying point ambush sites to his subordinates to cover these avenues. Once they occupy these sites, they report all enemy traffic going toward or away from the central ambush site to the commander. These outlying ambushes allow the enemy to pass through their kill zone until the commander initiates the central ambush. Once the central ambush begins, the outlying ambushes prevent enemy troops from escaping or entering the area.

**6-133.** The ambush unit commander normally specifies the signals required to control the ambush. He changes the meaning of audible and visual signals frequently to avoid setting patterns that the enemy can recognize. Otherwise, the enemy might recognize a signal and react in time to avoid the full effects of the ambush. For example, if a white star cluster is always used to signal withdrawal in a night ambush, an alert enemy might fire one and cause the ambush force to withdraw prematurely. The subordinate elements of the ambush unit must receive communications — in the form of signals — that relay the following information:

- Target approaching, normally given by a member of the security team to warn the ambush commander and the ambush elements of the target's progress.
- Initiate the ambush, given by the ambush unit commander; this signal should be a mass casualty-producing signal, such as a main gun round from tank, machine-gun fire, the detonation of mines or explosives, or other direct fire crew-served weapons.
- Lift or shift fire, given when the target is to be assaulted; all fires must stop or be shifted at once so that the assault element can attack before the target can react.
- Assault, given when the assault force is to move into the kill zone and complete its activities.
- Cease fire, given to cease all fires.
- Withdraw from the kill zone or ambush site, given when the ambush is completed or an enemy relief force is approaching.

**6-134.** The commander uses a variety of signals to communicate this information, such as radio transmissions, voice commands, vehicle horns, whistles, or pyrotechnics. All signals must have at least one backup. For example, if the signal to shift fire fails, the

assault element should not attack the target unless it receives the backup signal. Signals sent out before initiation of the ambush should not expose the ambush to detection by the enemy. The commander reviews SOP signals to see if they need to be revised or augmented to meet specific situational requirements.

### **Execution of an Ambush**

**6-135.** Surprise, coordinated fires, and control are the keys to a successful ambush. Surprise allows the ambush force to seize control of the situation. If total surprise is not possible, it must be so nearly complete that the target does not expect the ambush until it is too late to react effectively. Thorough planning, preparation, and execution help achieve surprise.

**6-136.** The commander conducts a leaders' reconnaissance with key personnel to confirm or modify his plan. This reconnaissance should be undetected by the enemy to preclude alerting him. If necessary, the commander modifies the ambush plan and immediately disseminates those changes to subordinate leaders and other affected organizations. The commander must maintain close control during movement to, occupation of, and withdrawal from the ambush site. Control is most critical when the ambush unit is approaching the target. Leaders enforce camouflage, noise, and light discipline.

**6-137.** The ambush unit's security element remains at full alert and uses all available observation devices to detect the enemy's approach to the ambush site. Each soldier's duties within each element are rotated as necessary to maintain alertness.

**6-138.** All elements of the ambush force reconnoiter their routes of withdrawal to the selected rally point. When possible, soldiers or crews reconnoiter the route they will use. On the commander's order, the ambush force withdraws to that rally point, reorganizes, and starts its return march. At a previously established location, it halts and disseminates any combat information obtained as a result of the ambush to all elements of the ambush force. However, future information systems should be able to disseminate this information without the need to halt a heavy force.

**6-139.** The commander positions all his weapons, including mines and demolitions, to obtain the maximum effectiveness against the target in the kill zone. He coordinates all fires, including those of supporting artillery and mortars. The goals of the support element are to isolate the kill zone, prevent the target's escape or reinforcement, and deliver a large volume of highly concentrated surprise fire into the kill zone. This fire

must inflict maximum damage so the assault element can quickly assault and destroy the target.

**6-140.** Fire discipline is a key part of any ambush. Fire must be withheld until the ambush commander gives the signal to initiate the ambush. That signal should be fire from the most deadly weapon in the ambush. Once initiated, the ambush unit delivers its fires at the maximum rate possible given the need for accuracy. Otherwise, the assault could be delayed, which gives the target time to react. Also, the possibility of fratricide increases. Accurate fires help achieve surprise as well as destroy the target. When it is necessary to assault the target, the lifting or shifting of fires must be precise. The assault element does not conduct its assault until enemy fires or resistance has been negated or eliminated.

**6-141.** If the ambush fails and the enemy pursues the ambush force, it may have to withdraw by bounds. It should use smoke to help conceal its withdrawal. The activation of limited-duration minefields along the withdrawal routes after the passage of the withdrawing ambush force can help stop or delay enemy pursuit.

**6-142.** The commander should debrief the ambush force to help identify enemy patterns of response, activities, and procedures, both inside and outside the ambush area. Patterns should be analyzed and sent through intelligence channels. Their impact on friendly methods should be incorporated into future tactics, techniques, and procedures.

## COUNTERATTACK

**6-143. A counterattack is an attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force with the general objective of denying the enemy his goal in attacking.** A unit conducts a counterattack to seize the initiative from the enemy through offensive action. A counterattack blocks an enemy penetration, restores the original position, attacks by fire into an engagement area to defeat or destroy an enemy force, or cuts him off and destroys him through fire and movement. Once launched, the counterattack normally becomes a decisive operation for the commander conducting the counterattack.

**6-144.** The commander plans and conducts a counterattack to attack the enemy when and where he is most vulnerable, while he is attempting to overcome friendly defensive positions. Normally, the commander attempts to retain his reserve or striking force to conduct a decisive counterattack once the enemy commits his main force to the attack. The commander assigns objectives to counterattacking forces when he intends for them

to assault the enemy. He normally assigns attack-by-fire positions when he intends to counterattack using primarily direct and indirect fires.

### **Organization of Forces**

**6-145.** There are two levels of counterattacks: major and local. In both cases, waiting for the enemy to act first may reveal the enemy's decisive operations and create an assailable flank to exploit. A defending unit conducts a major counterattack to seize the initiative from the enemy through offensive action after an enemy launches his attack. A commander also conducts major counterattacks to defeat or block an enemy penetration that endangers the integrity of the entire defense or to attrit the enemy by the defeat or destruction of an isolated portion of the attacking enemy force.

**6-146.** The commander of a major counterattack force typically organizes his assets into security, reconnaissance, main body, reserve, and sustainment forces. He uses those defending forces already in contact with the enemy to fix or contain those same enemy forces. The commander may use a force committed to the counterattack, such as the strike force in a mobile defense, his reserve, another echelon's reserve, or designate any other force he deems situationally appropriate to be the counterattack force. Any changes in task organization should be completed in time to allow units to conduct rehearsals with their attached or supported unit.

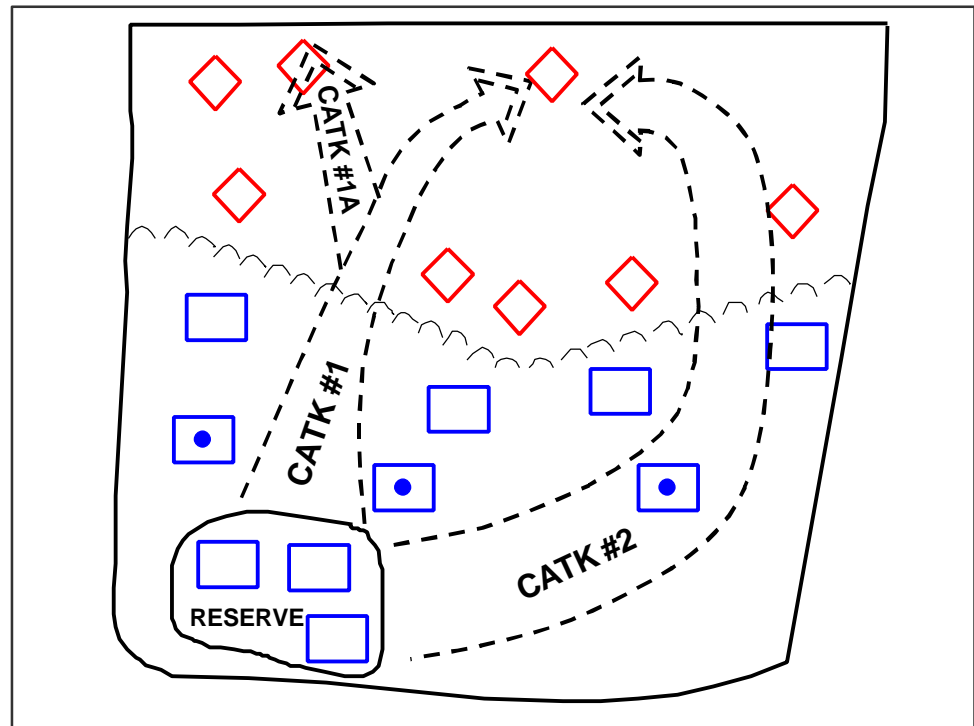
**6-147.** A commander conducts a local counterattack with whatever forces are immediately available to retake positions that have been lost to enemy action. The forces often consist of the reserves of subordinates and defending forces that survive after completing their withdrawal from lost positions. While it is unlikely that the commander retask organizes the forces conducting a local counterattack, he organizes the force into a security force and a main body. He may be able to designate an element to conduct reconnaissance.

**6-148.** The counterattack force is a committed force from the beginning of the defensive operation if the commander's defensive scheme hinges on a counterattack as the defeat mechanism, such as the strike force in a mobile defense. In this case, the commander should designate another force as his reserve.

### **Planning a Counterattack**

**6-149.** A commander plans his counterattack to strike the enemy when and where he is most vulnerable. This is normally against the flank or rear of an enemy force deployed and oriented on a friendly defensive position, or when an enemy force first occupies a previously defended locality. The commander assigns objectives or attack-by-fire

positions to counterattacking forces depending on whether intends to close with and assault the enemy.



**Figure 6-5. Major Counterattack**

**6-150.** Major counterattack plans are normally developed as a branch or sequel to the main defensive plan. (See Figure 6-5.) A major counterattack may achieve surprise when it strikes the enemy from an unanticipated direction. For that reason the force directed to conduct a major counterattack, such as the strike force in a mobile defense, should be involved in developing those plans as well as in plans for exploiting potential success. Local counterattacks may or may not be the result of previous deliberate planning.

#### **Execution of a Counterattack**

**6-151.** A commander should not counterattack unless he has a reasonable chance of success. The commander attempts to retain his reserve for decisive operations conducted after the enemy reveals his decisive operation and commits the majority of his combat power. If the commander orders his reserve to conduct a planned counterattack, the reserve becomes a committed force and the commander should take measures to designative or reconstitute a new reserve.

**6-152.** Subordinate commanders initiate local counterattack with the forces on hand when it fits within the higher commander's intent. The conduct of a local counterattack should be swift and violent. It should exploit any disorganization on the part of the enemy, such as the confusion that temporarily exists in an attacking force after it seizes a defended position. A rapidly mounted local counterattack may yield better results than a more deliberate counterattack executed by a higher echelon because of the speed at which it can be launched.

**6-153.** In the face of a strong enemy penetration, a commander may conduct local counterattacks to retain or seize positions on the shoulders of the enemy's penetration. This prevents the enemy from widening the penetration while forces from other defending units engage the penetrating enemy forces. Holding the shoulders can also prevent the sacrifice of positional depth because the limited gap in the defensive position prevents an attacking enemy from fully exploiting his success.

#### **DEMONSTRATIONS AND FEINTS**

**6-154. Demonstrations and feints are subordinate forms of the attack intended to draw the enemy's attention away from the location of the commander's decisive operation(s).** A commander uses them in conjunction with other military deception activities. They generally attempt to deceive the enemy and induce him to move reserves and shift his fire support to locations where they cannot immediately impact the friendly decisive operation(s) or take other actions not conducive to the enemy's conduct of the defense. Both forms are always shaping operations. The commander must synchronize the conduct of these forms of attack with higher and lower echelon plans and operations to prevent inadvertently placing another unit at risk.

**6-155.** The principal difference between these forms of attack is that in a feint, the commander assigns the force an objective limited in size, scope, or some other measure. **Forces conducting a feint make direct fire contact with the enemy. Forces conducting a demonstration do not seek direct fire contact with the enemy.**

#### **RAID**

**6-156. A raid is a limited objective, small-scale operation involving swift penetration of enemy territory.** It is designed to secure information, confuse the enemy, or destroy his installations. A raid can also be used to support rescue and



recovery operations. A raid ends with a planned withdrawal once the mission is completed.

**6-157.** A simplified chain of command is an essential organizational requirement. A raid usually requires a force carefully tailored to neutralize specific enemy forces operating in the vicinity of the objective and to perform whatever additional functions are required to accomplish the objective of the raid. These additional functions can consist of the demolition of bridges over major water obstacles or the recovery of an attack helicopter pilot shot down forward of the FLOT. The commander incorporates any necessary support specialists during the initial planning stage of the operation.

**6-158.** When a commander and his staff plan a raid, they develop courses of action that meet ethical, legal, political, and technical feasibility criteria. Planners require precise, time-sensitive, all-source intelligence. They develop as many alternative courses of action as time and the situation permit. They carefully weigh each alternative. In addition to those planning considerations associated with other offensive operations, they must decide the risks associated with conducting the mission and possible repercussions.

**6-159.** Time permitting, all elements involved in a raid should be fully rehearsed in their functions. The key elements in determining the level of detail and the opportunities for rehearsal prior to mission execution are time, operational security, and deception requirements.

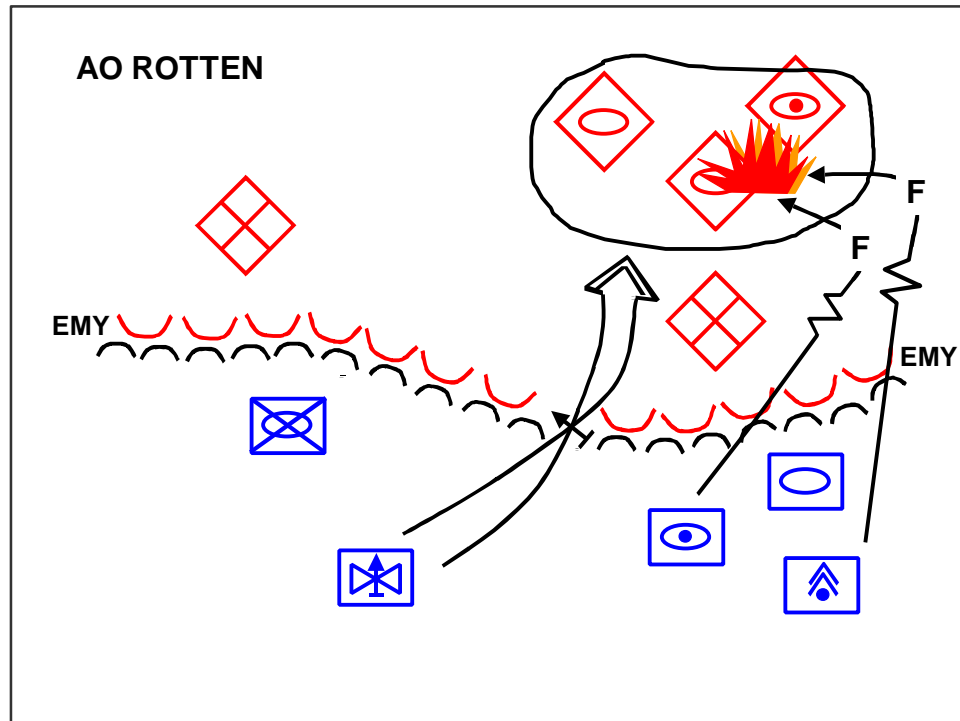
## **SPOILING ATTACK**

**6-160. A spoiling attack is a limited-objective attack that preempts an enemy attack while the enemy is in the preparation phase.** The objective of a spoiling attack is to destroy enemy personnel and equipment, not to secure terrain and other physical objectives. See Figure 6-6. A commander conducts a spoiling attack whenever possible during friendly defensive operations to strike the enemy while he is in assembly areas or attack positions preparing for his own offensive operation or is temporarily stopped. It usually employs heavy, attack helicopter, or fire support elements to attack enemy assembly positions in front of the friendly commander's main line of resistance or battle positions.

**6-161.** The commander's reasons for conducting a spoiling attack include:

- Disrupt the enemy's offensive preparations.
- Destroy key assets that the enemy requires to attack, such as his fire support systems, fuel and ammunition stocks, and bridging equipment.
- Gain additional time for the defending force to prepare its positions.

- The commander synchronizes the conduct of the spoiling attack with his other defensive operations.



**6-162.** The commander can employ his reserves in a spoiling attack to throw the enemy's offensive preparations off stride. The following basic considerations affect the spoiling attack:

- 6-163.** There are two aspects that distinguish a spoiling attack:

- 6 - 44

If either of these two actions happens, then the force conducting the spoiling attack will most likely be destroyed by the enemy.

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*"The most important goal of our action is the destruction of the enemy to the last limit of possibility."*

**Field Marshal Prince Mikhail I. Kutuzov**

## CHAPTER 7

# EXPLOITATION

**Exploitation is a type of offensive action that rapidly follows-up gains to take full advantage of battlefield success.**

Commanders at all echelons exploit successful offensive actions. Attacks that succeed in annihilating a defending enemy are rare.

Failure to aggressively exploit success at every turn may give the enemy time to reconstitute an effective defense by shifting his forces or by regaining the initiative through a counterattack.

Therefore, every offensive operation not

restricted by higher authority or lack of resources should be followed without delay by bold exploitation. The commander designs his exploitation to maintain pressure on the enemy, compound and take advantage of his disorganization, shatter his will to resist, and seize decisive terrain.

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**7-2.** Exploitation is the primary means of translating tactical success into operational advantage. It reinforces the disorganization of enemy forces and the confusion experienced in the enemy's command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) system caused by tactical defeat through continuous friendly offensive efforts. It is an integral part of the concept of the offense. The psychological effect of tactical defeat creates confusion and apprehension throughout the enemy C<sup>2</sup> structure and reduces the enemy's ability to react. Exploitation takes advantage of this reduction in enemy capabilities to make permanent what would be only a temporary tactical effect if exploitation were not conducted. Exploitation may be decisive.

**7-3.** Local exploitation by the committed force follows a successful attack. A unit conducts a local exploitation when it capitalizes on whatever tactical opportunities it creates in the course of accomplishing its assigned offensive mission. Whenever possible, the lead attacking unit transitions directly to the exploitation after accomplishing its mission in a local exploitation. If this is not feasible, the commander

can pass fresh forces (follow and assume) into the lead. The commander acts quickly to capitalize on local success. Although such local exploitations may appear insignificant, their cumulative effects can be decisive. Subordinate commanders, working within a higher commander's intent, can use their initiative to launch an exploitation. When a commander initiates a local exploitation, he informs his higher headquarters to keep that commander informed of his intentions. This prevents the inadvertent disruption of the higher echelon's battle or campaign.

**7-4.** Conduct of a major exploitation is a specific contingency mission assigned to a large unit in anticipation of offensive success by another unit of equivalent size. Divisions and brigades are the echelons that conduct a major exploitation although a corps can conduct a major exploitation as part of a multi-corps operation.

## **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES**

**7-5.** The forces conducting an attack are also the forces that initially exploit that attack's success. The commander does not assign a subordinate unit the mission of exploitation prior to starting an operation. When the opportunity to exploit success occurs, the commander reorganizes his unit internally to reflect the existing factors of METT-TC. He uses fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) to conduct actions on contact. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of actions on contact.) If a commander needs additional resources to support the exploitation, he requests them from the appropriate headquarters. Each exploitation force should be large enough to protect itself from those enemy forces it expects to encounter. It should also be a reasonably self-sufficient combined arms force capable of operations outside of the supporting range of the main body.

**7-6.** The units that create an opportunity to exploit should not be expected to perform the exploitation to an extended depth. If the commander plans to exploit with a specific subordinate unit, he must specify the degree of damage or risk to that force he is willing to accept in the course of the current operation. If the initially attacking units incur significant losses of combat power, the commander should replace them as soon as possible. When the exploiting force's combat power weakens because of fatigue, disorganization, or attrition, or when it must hold ground or resupply, the commander should continue the exploitation with a fresh force. In both cases, the replacement force should be mobile and specially organized to conduct exploitation.

**7-7.** The exploitation may be more effective if the commander can commit additional forces and assign them the task of either follow and support or follow and assume.

Units designated to follow and support are assigned missions to assist exploiting forces by relieving them of tasks that would slow their advances. The lead unit and any follow and assume or follow and support units exchange liaison teams to facilitate the transfer of responsibilities. Units designated to follow and assume conduct a forward passage of lines and replace the initial exploiting forces when they approach their culminating point. Normally, the next higher commander retains control of the forces performing the tasks of follow and support or follow and assume. (Appendix B expands the discussion of these tasks.) When possible, units assigned these tasks should possess mobility equal to that of the exploiting unit or receive additional engineers and transportation assets to provide the necessary mobility. Once organized, they are committed forces and should receive their normally associated slice of artillery, air defense, engineer, and other CS and CSS support. In an exploitation projected to cross significant distances, the commander may attach elements of a follow and support unit to the exploiting force to ensure unity of command and effort.

**7-8.** Since an exploitation typically covers a wider front than an attacking force, fire support assets may find their supported elements operating outside normal supporting ranges. They must displace forward to ensure the continued provision of fires on and beyond enemy formations, which may cause some difficulty in supporting the exploiting force's flank elements. To provide the required support, these fire support units, as well as independently operating assets, can be attached to subordinate elements of the exploiting force. Otherwise, the commander can move additional reinforcing fire support units and systems forward to fill the void.

**7-9.** Adequate mobile air defense units should accompany exploiting forces. Air defense arrangements for the initial attack remain effective throughout the exploitation. However, when the commander extends his formations and assets to cover more area, the air defense coverage becomes less effective. The commander needs to consider the risks associated with moving out from under his air defense artillery umbrella. Counterair operations by the other services (USAF, USN, and USMC) may provide the desired degree of air defense protection.

**7-10.** The exploitation mission demands a force with a significant mobility advantage over the enemy. Attack helicopters and air assault assets may constitute a portion of that exploiting force's combat power. They are extremely useful in seizing defiles, crossing obstacles, and otherwise capitalizing on their mobility to attack and cut off disorganized enemy elements. They can also seize or control key terrain such as important river-

crossing sites or vital enemy transportation nodes along the exploiting force's route of advance into and through the enemy's sustainment area. The commander integrates combat engineers into the exploiting force to help breach obstacles, keep ground forces maneuvering, and provide countermobility protection to the flanks. Typically, problems that affect an exploiting force's mobility are minefields and other obstacles. The commander also uses his engineers to keep his supply routes open.

**7-11.** The commander retains only those reserves necessary to ensure his flexibility of operation, continued momentum in the advance, and likely enemy responses to the exploitation. Chapter 6 discusses employment considerations for the reserve.

## **RECONNAISSANCE AND SECURITY**

**7-12.** When a commander initiates an exploitation, the exact enemy situation may not be clearly known or understood. The commander establishes a reconnaissance force to gain and maintain enemy contact. He complements his reconnaissance effort with sensors and surveillance assets and intelligence products produced by adjacent, higher, and lower echelons to maintain his situational understanding of the strength, dispositions, capabilities, and intentions of all significant enemy elements within his area of interest. In an exploitation, the commander normally emphasizes reconnaissance more than security. Nevertheless, since the exploiting force moves independently, he addresses the security needs of his force.

**7-13.** The commander assigns the appropriate security missions to his designated security forces the same way he would for a movement to contact. (See Chapter 5.) An exploiting corps or division commander typically organizes his forward-most security element into a covering force to protect the main body's movement and develop the situation before the commitment of his main body. These security elements respond directly to him.

**7-14.** If an exploiting force is unable to resource a covering force for independent operations, it may use an advance guard in place of a covering force. This is typical for a brigade conducting an exploitation on its own. In some cases when the higher echelon (corps or division) creates a covering force, a brigade may still push out an advance guard behind the covering force. This normally occurs when subordinate units in an exploitation advance in multiple parallel columns.

## **SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS**

**7-15.** Combat support and combat service support arrangements must be extremely flexible during exploitation operations. In the conduct of exploitation operations



directed against uncommitted enemy forces or in exploitation operations directed along diverging lines of advance, CS and CSS units are commonly attached to the exploiting maneuver force. Alternatively, the support assets can follow the exploiting force in an echeloned manner along main supply routes (MSRs). Transportation and supplies to sustain the force become increasingly important as the exploitation progresses. As supply lines lengthen, the condition of lines of communications and the conduct of route and convoy security can become problems. The largest possible stocks of fuel, spare parts, and ammunition should accompany the force so that it does not lose momentum because of a lack of support. The exploitation effort may be limited more by vehicle mechanical failures and the need for fuel than by combat losses or a lack of ammunition. Therefore, direct support maintenance support teams accompany the exploiting force to assess the problem and repair disabled vehicles within a limited time period or evacuate them to maintenance collection points for repair by general support maintenance units. The commander considers using his utility and cargo helicopters to move critical supplies forward during the exploitation.

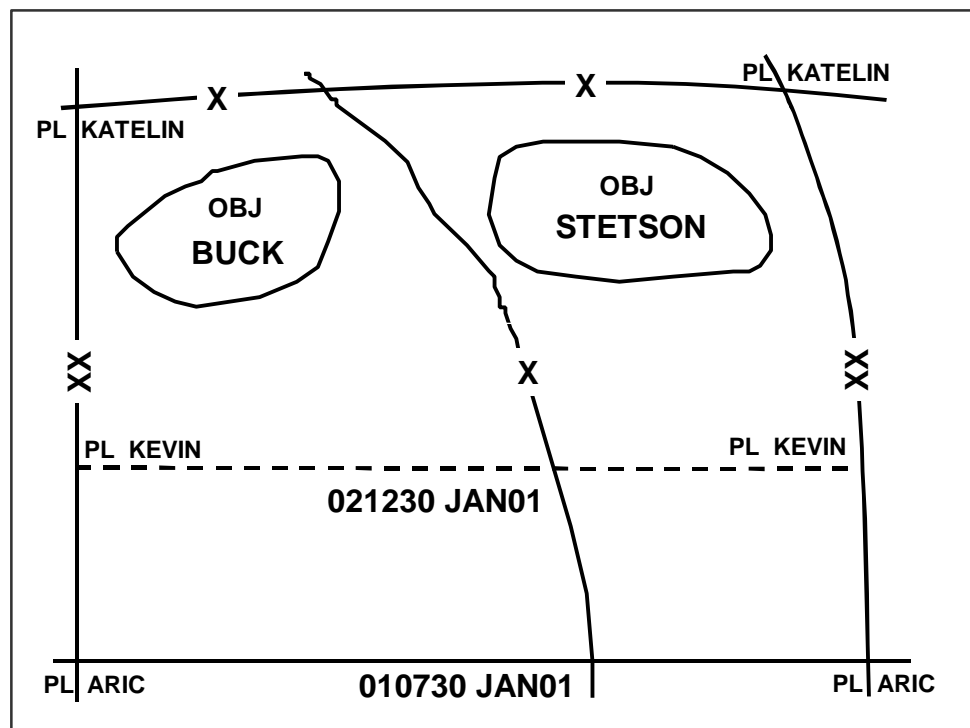


Figure 7-1. Exploitation Control Measures in a Contiguous AO

## CONTROL MEASURES

**7-16.** An exploitation uses fewer control measures than many other operations because of the uncertain enemy situation and the need to provide subordinate commanders with the maximum possible flexibility to take advantage of fleeting opportunities. (See Figure 7-1.) Planners develop graphic control measures as part of the planning process. The commander issues these control measures as part of the attack order to facilitate command and control when the force transitions to an exploitation.

**7-17.** A unit conducting an exploitation normally operates in the same area of operation (AO) it was assigned for the attack. In an exploitation, the exploiting unit assigns subordinate units their own AOs. In an exploitation, boundaries between subordinate units may change often to take advantage of opportunities. Since an exploiting force deploys both reconnaissance and security forces, the commander must rapidly adjust his boundaries as the exploiting force advances. The commander designates obstacle-restricted areas to prevent friendly obstacles from hindering the movement of the exploiting force. He designates obstacle zones on the flanks of the exploiting force's movement corridors to enhance his security. He uses phase lines and subsequent objectives to control the conduct of the exploitation. The commander uses objectives to orient the movement of exploiting forces. Although an exploitation may result in taking a terrain objective, the primary focus should be on destroying the enemy force. The commander may establish a limit of advance if he can anticipate a culminating point or some other restriction, such as political considerations regarding an international border, that requires its establishment.

**7-18.** A commander normally employs permissive fire support control measures during an exploitation. A coordinated fire line (CFL) ensures rapid response. Movement of the CFL is particularly important to provide adequate support as the force continues to advance. Even if the culmination of the exploitation is not anticipated, establishing a forward boundary is important to facilitate operations beyond that boundary by a higher headquarters. The commander can use additional control measures, such as targets and checkpoints, as required.

## PLANNING FOR AN EXPLOITATION

**7-19.** The commander must plan for the decentralized execution of an exploitation. His commander's intent is especially important because subordinates must be able to exercise initiative in a rapidly changing, fluid situation. The commander must state the purpose

of the exploitation, which may be to clear enemy forces out of the AO, cut them off so they cannot withdraw, or destroy their artillery and other fire support systems. The intent must describe the desired end state. A clear commander's intent provides subordinates with guidance on how to integrate their operations into the overall operations of the higher headquarters. Only subordinates who can act quickly can seize all opportunities to damage the enemy or accelerate the tempo of operations. A commander should place minimal restrictions on his subordinates. These may include clear instructions regarding the seizure of key terrain and the size of enemy forces that may be bypassed. Reliable, secure communications between the exploiting force, the follow and support force, and the commander facilitate coordination that can maximize the impact of the exploitation. However, all subordinates should have a clear picture of the desired end state to conduct operations that support it, even if communications are lost.

**7-20.** Planning for an exploitation begins during the preparation phase of all offensive operations. To avoid losing critical time during the transition from a movement to contact or an attack to an exploitation, the commander tentatively identifies forces, objectives, and AOs for subordinate units before the offensive operation begins. When the opportunity to exploit occurs, brigade and higher-echelon commanders should initiate the exploitation, either as a branch of or a sequel to the existing operation. The commander's plan should attempt to avoid driving the enemy back in the direction of his own sustaining base.

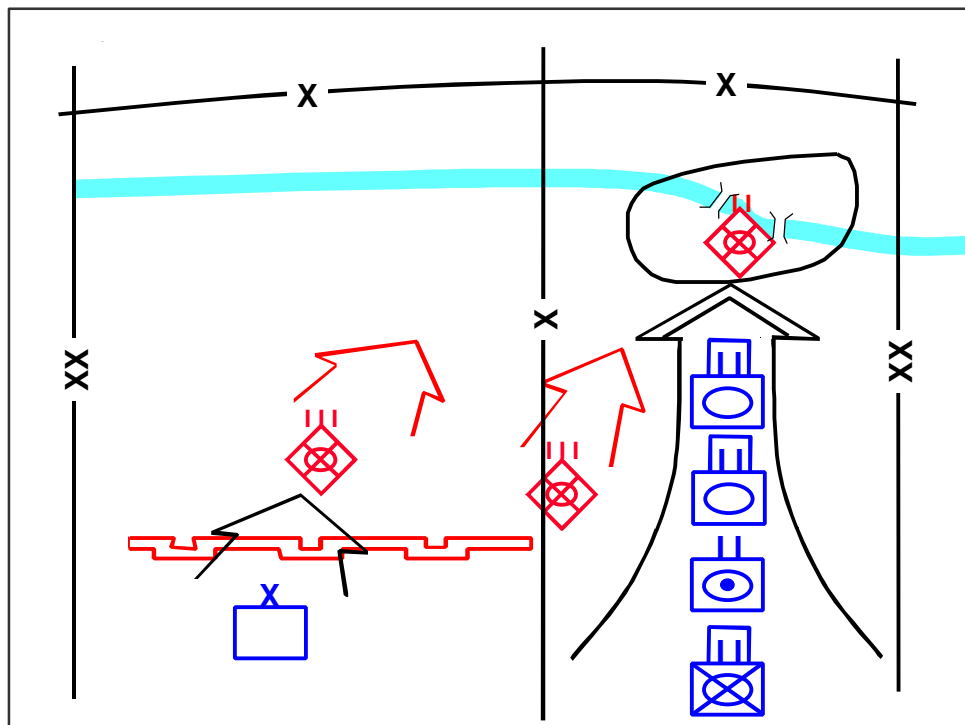
**7-21.** During exploitation planning and execution, the commander balances the exploiting force's need for speed and momentum against its need for security as it begins to move beyond supporting range of the rest of the force. The commander must be careful not to allow an exploiting force to move outside of his main body's supporting distance. Determining the supporting distance requires some knowledge of the enemy's remaining capabilities. Generally, the commander should approach exploitation planning with a sense of guarded optimism. It is an excellent opportunity to shatter enemy cohesion and gain a position of advantage over the enemy; however, the commander cannot allow the exploiting force to fall into an enemy trap where it could be drawn into a salient and destroyed in detail.

**7-22.** The exploitation may take the form of a movement to contact with a series of hasty attacks. The commander usually issues a series of FRAGOs that designate:

- Movement formation.

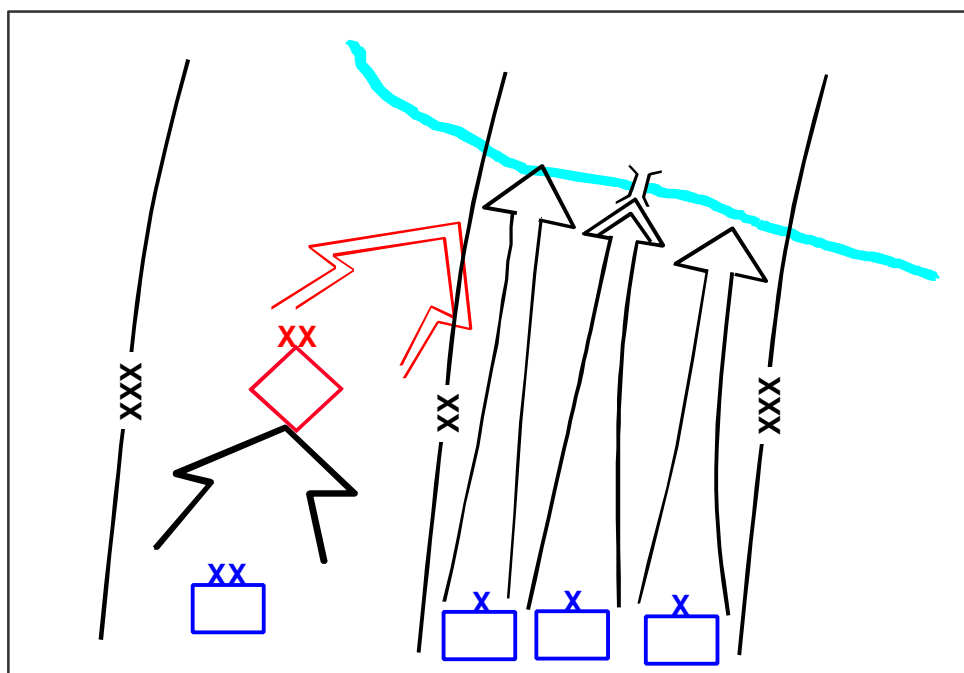
- The position of each major element of the exploiting force within that formation.
- Any required modifications to task organization.
- Bypass criteria.
- Revised or new control measures that assist with the maneuver, such as objectives, boundary changes, a limit of advance (LOA), and FSCM.

**7-23.** Exploiting forces normally maneuver on a wide front and on at least two axis . The forces on each axis are capable of independent action, depending on the mobility of the force, the road net, and other aspects of the terrain. In some cases, rather than assigning subordinates their own AOs, the commander may designate a movement formation for his entire unit so he can concentrate all his combat power against a specific enemy element. In this case, the commander normally adopts a variation of the column, line, or vee formation. (Chapter 4 discusses combat formations.) Movement on parallel routes is preferred; however, the terrain and the enemy situation may force the exploiting force to advance in a column formation. Generally, the use of a column in the exploitation emphasizes flexibility at the expense of the placement of maximum firepower forward. Figure 7-2 shows a brigade column in an exploitation.



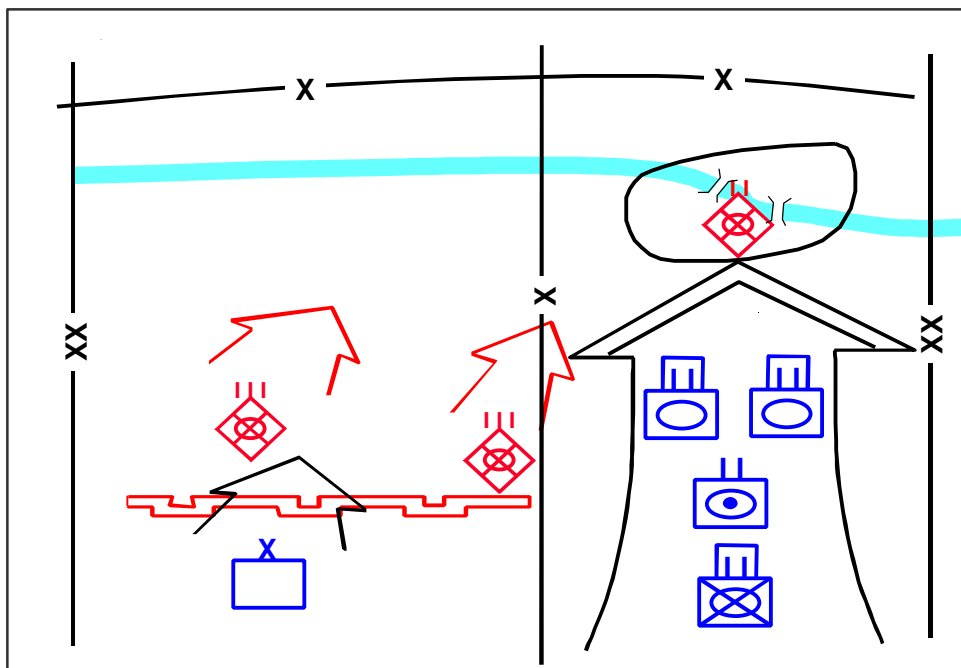
**Figure 7-2. Brigade Exploitation: Battalions in Column Formation**

**7-24.** In exceptional circumstances, when the enemy is clearly incapable of effectively resisting, the commander can choose not to retain a reserve but commit all his forces to the exploitation. He may employ a line formation with two or more elements abreast without a reserve when the approach to the objectives must be made on as wide a front as possible. For example, a commander could use this formation when attempting to secure crossing sites over a major river. (See Figure 7-3.) He could also employ this formation against sporadic and weakening resistance when the enemy lacks a significant counterattack capability or when the counterattack can be blocked by means other than the employment of the reserve. Despite the lack of a constituted reserve, other actions, such as the effective employment of massed indirect fires, can provide the commander with the flexibility usually provided by the reserve for influencing actions during the conduct of the exploitation.



**Figure 7-3. Division Exploitation: Brigades Abreast, No Reserve**

**7-25.** A vee formation with two or more elements abreast and a reserve allows the unit to advance on a reasonably wide front with the bulk of the unit's direct firepower oriented forward. This configuration helps when creating gaps in the enemy's defenses. While the bulk of the unit is committed, the reserve is available to exploit the success of the attacking elements, assume the mission of the attacking elements, or counter enemy threats as they develop. (See Figure 7-4.)



**Figure 7-4. Brigade Exploitation: Two Battalions Forward, One in Reserve**

**7-26.** Because of the need to rapidly transition from an attack to an exploitation, fire support planning for the exploitation must take place as part of the planning for the attack. The commander selects targets throughout the depth of the enemy's defensive area to support an exploitation. During the exploitation, there is little time to revise target lists. Target considerations are similar in nature to those of a movement to contact. In addition, the exploitation requires a flexible, responsive, and redundant fire control net that must be planned in advance. Coordination with the echelon intelligence officer is critical as the situation develops into exploitation. The exploiting force templates known enemy locations within its area of operations as danger areas and targets them.

**7-27.** The fire support plan includes allocating support for meeting engagements or hasty attacks that occur during the exploitation. The fire support coordinator plans targets beyond the projected locations of the exploiting maneuver force to shield the force from enemy counterattacks. He then addresses how to provide fire support to the force in its movement to the LOA and targets locations beyond the LOA to interdict the enemy's lines of communication (LOC).

**7-28.** The commander plans for artillery displacement as an integral part of the exploitation. Artillery assets must displace at a pace that exceeds normal offensive

operations while maintaining the capability to provide accurate and lethal fires. The commander can normally plan on his forces using less ammunition during an exploitation than in an attack because fleeing enemy forces are normally not in prepared positions, which makes them more vulnerable. The commander should also consider using close air support in the exploitation, especially to support those units moving beyond supporting range of the main body. Airborne forward air controllers can help identify and track high-payoff targets forward of the exploiting force.

**7-29.** The commander plans situational obstacles for each phase of the operation. For example, he plans to emplace scatterable minefields in those areas that could be used by an enemy counterattack force as his forces move forward.

**7-30.** The enemy may be willing to commit his aircraft against a friendly exploitation that endangers the viability of his defense, buying him time to prepare a defense while weakening the friendly force. The commander plans to move his air defense assets with priority of protection to the decisive operation. He also uses them to protect his lines of communication from enemy air attack, thereby allowing his CS and CSS elements to keep pace with the operation. Planning must address how to rapidly resupply air defense missiles as they are used. It must allow for adjustments in the priority of protection assigned to different elements during the exploitation.

**7-31.** The commander must anticipate the exploitation and ensure that his logistics plan supports the force all the way to the LOA. Planning for CSS in the exploitation includes designating future main supply routes (MSRs), logistics release points (LRPs), unit maintenance collection points (UMCPs), and ambulance exchange points. In sustaining the exploitation, petroleum, oil, and lubricates (POL) consumption and vehicle maintenance are primary concerns of CSS planners. A significant factor is that an exploiting force tends to travel on a broad front, which may necessitate designating one or more lateral MSRs to handle the dispersion. Logistics operations must be prepared to bound their combat service support assets farther forward and move them more often than in an attack.

**7-32.** Selecting a flexible MSR is critical. The MSR must be able to respond to changes in the direction of the exploitation. Maintenance of the MSR is a responsibility of the force engineer. During planning, the commander must specifically address the control of logistic units and convoys. He calls them forward and redirects them as needed. He may have to plan for guides to assist their movement around bypassed enemy positions and obstacles. He may assign some combat elements from the reserve a sustainment

area security mission to help protect CSS elements or secure the MSR. The commander must also ensure adequate plans exist for controlling displaced civilians on the battlefield so that they do not interfere with follow-on maneuver, CS, and CSS assets. This is a critical function of civil-military operations.

## **EXECUTION OF AN EXPLOITATION**

**7-33.** Exploitation requires physical and mental aggressiveness to combat the friction of limited visibility, fatigue, bad weather, dangers of fratricide, and extended operations. It requires bold and aggressive reconnaissance; prompt use of firepower; and rapid employment of previously uncommitted units. Exploiting forces drive swiftly toward their objectives, sever escape routes, and strike at enemy command posts, communications nodes, reserves, artillery, and combat support units to prevent the enemy from reorganizing an effective defense. Well-supported by tactical air support, air cavalry, and attack helicopters, exploiting forces should be able to change direction on short notice.

**7-34.** To maintain sufficient forces to conduct an exploitation, the commander must ensure that his subordinates focus on his intent. They should not dissipate his combat power by seeking minor tactical successes or reducing inconsequential enemy forces. His aim is to reach the final objective with the maximum possible strength as rapidly as possible. The commander must provide his exploiting forces with mobile support, including air resupply to move emergency lifts of POL and ammunition.

**7-35.** The transition from an attack to an exploitation may be so gradual that it is hardly distinguishable; it may also be abrupt. The abrupt transition may occur when a force uses massed quantities of precision munitions, it achieves surprise, or it overwhelms a much-weaker enemy force. Normally, exploitation occurs after the force secures its objective. With adequate support, the commander can launch the exploitation with his initial assault or at any time after that, depending on the effects of the fires and the commander's desires.

**7-36.** Since the exploitation takes advantage of previous success, forces previously allocated toward attacking enemy forces normally continue their ongoing activities. These activities include:

- Attrition or defeat of enemy reserves prior to their commitment.
- Destruction of enemy countermobility assets prior to their employment on a friendly avenue of advance for the exploiting force.
- Disruption of enemy units attempting to reestablish a coherent defense.
- Disruption of enemy sustainment operations.



This assumes the commander has accurate intelligence data to target these enemy actions.

**7-37.** Generally, as one part of the attacking force finishes clearing an objective, the commander orders the remaining elements to exploit that success. To accomplish this with minimal confusion, the commander must know where each of his elements is and what combat formation each has adopted. If the commander has previously trained and rehearsed his force to change rapidly from one combat formation to another, to change missions, and to change the direction of advance, he can time the execution of such changes to maintain the initiative over an enemy.

**7-38.** The commander can also initiate an exploitation when he realizes that the enemy force is having difficulty maintaining its position or cohesion. Updated intelligence is crucial to the commander since it is difficult to accurately predict the exact conditions required to transition from an attack to an exploitation. Therefore, the commander and his subordinates watch the enemy's defenses for indications of disintegration that may signal the opportunity to transition to exploitation. Opportunities for exploitation typically exist when the following events occur:

- The enemy attacks friendly forward forces using his most destructive weapons, to include weapons of mass destruction.
- Enemy reconnaissance intensifies.
- Rearward movement increases, especially by fire support and reserves.
- Facilities, installations, equipment, and supply stockpiles are prepared for demolition or destruction.
- Various units intermix their vehicles and personnel in combat formations or march columns.
- Number of prisoners captured increases significantly.
- Enemy fire decreases in intensity and effectiveness.
- Fires increase in one or more individual sectors of the front that do not appear to be synchronized with the developing situation and at a time when the amount of defensive fires appears to be decreasing.
- Enemy resistance decreases considerably, or the enemy lacks any type of organized defense.
- Reports confirm the capture or absence of enemy leaders.
- Amounts of abandoned enemy war materiel encountered increases significantly.
- Friendly forces overrun enemy artillery, C<sup>2</sup> facilities, and supply dumps.
- Enemy units disintegrate.

In any case, the commander ruthlessly exploits vulnerable enemy forces after weighing and accommodating the risks.

## **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**7-39.** The exploiting force must gain *and* maintain contact with the enemy. This is a critical aspect of the exploitation since the enemy may be trying to break contact and distance himself from the friendly force to give him time to recover. After a successful attack, the exploiting force must perform aggressive reconnaissance to both its front and flanks. Mission and intent of exploitation determine how much enemy contact is required since exploitations often focus on terrain objectives rather than enemy forces. As discussed in Chapter 6, this reconnaissance effort must start almost immediately after an attacking unit secures its objective. If dedicated reconnaissance assets are available, they maintain enemy contact, observe the enemy's movements, and search for weakly defended enemy positions. If these assets are not available, other maneuver units perform those reconnaissance tasks. While maintaining contact with the enemy, the reconnaissance force tries to locate enemy reserves, uncommitted forces, and blocking positions. This effort helps the exploiting force avoid being lead into ambushes as the enemy seeks to recover the initiative by counterattacking.

**7-40.** When the previously assigned offensive mission is accomplished, units at all echelons push out their reconnaissance and security forces to discover whether the opportunity exists to initiate an exploitation after accomplishing their mission. At brigade and battalion echelon these reconnaissance and security forces must gain and maintain enemy contact while remaining within the supporting range of their parent brigade or battalion.

**7-41.** The commander uses air reconnaissance to augment his ground reconnaissance. He can employ aerial sensors, such as JSTARS, air cavalry, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in advance of ground maneuver reconnaissance. This allows aerial observation of named and targeted areas of interest that facilitate the unit's movement and cue the attack of high-value targets. Scout and attack helicopters can locate enemy positions and engage the enemy to disrupt his movement and preparations. Aviation assets surge to maintain constant contact with the enemy and keep the pressure on him.

## **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

**7-42.** Exploitation presumes the enemy has already been somewhat disrupted. An exploitation seeks to maintain or increase this disruption by preventing the enemy from effectively reconstituting his defenses. At the division and corps levels, the commander combines the effects of his operations against enemy reserves and uncommitted forces with the rapid maneuver of his close combat forces to maintain this disruption. Attack

helicopters can maneuver in front of exploiting ground maneuver forces to destroy high-payoff or high-value targets. Rapid advances by the exploiting force keep the enemy force off-balance and degrade his intelligence and surveillance capabilities, thus providing some security from attack. The commander uses all available resources to maintain pressure on the enemy using both overwhelming combat power and asymmetric weapons systems. The commander never allows the enemy an opportunity to recover from the initial blow. The exploiting force's fire support system must deliver massed fires quickly to respond to any contingencies that arise during the exploitation.

#### **FIX THE ENEMY**

**7-43.** An exploiting force has three goals in fixing an enemy force. First, it tries to break down the enemy's combined arms organization by fixing enemy units in positions out of supporting distance of each other. This allows the exploiting force to defeat the enemy in detail. Second, the commander attacks out-of-contact enemy forces before they can adversely affect the exploitation. By attacking these enemy forces, the commander seeks to fix them in their current positions or force them to move to locations where they can be harmlessly contained until the exploiting force or a follow and support force can engage and defeat them. Third, it achieves a specific targeting effect — such as causing fifteen percent casualties — and disrupt the enemy commander's plan.

#### **MANEUVER**

**7-44.** During an exploitation, the exploiting force maneuvers to maintain pressure on the enemy. The commander can use any heavy and mobile light forces, such as airborne and air assault elements, to secure terrain objectives or choke points critical to the advance and to cut enemy lines of escape. The commander takes advantage of available vertical envelopment capabilities. The exploiting force clears only enough of its AO to permit its advance. It cuts through enemy logistics units and LOCs to seize objectives vital to the enemy's defense. It attacks from the march to overrun weak enemy formations. In accordance with the bypass criteria, the exploiting force can contain and bypass those enemy pockets of resistance too small to jeopardize the mission while its commander reports these enemy forces to adjacent units, following units, and higher headquarters.

**7-45.** If an enemy unit is too strong for the leading elements of the exploiting force to overrun and destroy, succeeding elements of the force conduct a hasty attack based on the combat information provided by its leading elements. Such enemy forces are rarely

attacked frontally. In almost all cases, the commander uses another form of maneuver to produce faster and better results with fewer casualties. While the exploiting force is seeking one or more assailable flanks, available fire support systems continue to engage the enemy to divert attention from the attempted envelopment and destroy as much enemy combat power as possible.

**7-46.** The exploiting force may face enemy-prepared belts of defensive positions in depth when it is exploiting the initial success of the attack. Therefore, the exploiting force must move rapidly to attack and destroy the enemy before he can settle into his subsequent or supplemental positions. The more rapidly this can be done, the less likely it is that succeeding defensive lines will be fully prepared and the less effort it will take to penetrate each successive defensive position. The exploiting force repeats this process as many times as necessary until it breaks completely through the enemy's defenses.

**7-47.** The commander's primary concern when initiating an exploitation resulting from a successful attack is to shift his force into the appropriate combat formation and task-organize it with additional capabilities and resources to take advantage of a short window of opportunity. Assuming that the force accomplishes this with relative ease, he must control the formation as it moves and prevent its overextension. The commander must anticipate the enemy's reaction to his actions. The real danger to the exploiting force is not the immediate enemy but the enemy not yet engaged. Overextension is a risk inherent in exploitation. While the commander must be concerned with this, he must also guard against being overcautious.

**7-48.** Surrender appeals and ultimatums are particularly effective when directed against enemy units that have been surrounded, isolated, or bypassed. Field Manual 33-1, *Psychological Operations*, details the techniques for communicating with the enemy.

**7-49.** While the exploiting force is conducting its operations, the follow and support force, if available, —

- Widens or secures the shoulders of a penetration.
- Destroys bypassed enemy units.
- Relieves supported units that have halted to contain enemy forces.
- Blocks the movement of enemy reinforcements.
- Opens and secures lines of communications.
- Guards prisoners, key areas, and installations.
- Controls refugees.

#### **FOLLOW THROUGH**

**7-50.** Once the exploitation begins, forces move toward the LOA without any operational pauses. Exploitation continues around the clock so the enemy cannot escape

the relentless offensive pressure. The exploiting force retains terrain only as necessary to accomplish its mission. The commander must be careful not to dissipate combat power to achieve minor tactical successes or to reduce small enemy forces. Once he reaches the LOA, the commander quickly shifts his attention to survivability and countermobility because of the possibility of an enemy counterattack.

**7-51.** At some point a unit conducting an exploitation reaches a culminating point or transition to a pursuit. Culmination can occur for the variety of reasons discussed in Chapter 4, such as friendly losses or the enemy's commitment of his reserve. The commander of a unit approaching culmination should transition to another type or form of action. On the other hand, a pursuit enables the commander to complete his destruction of the enemy.

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*"In pursuit you must always stretch possibilities to the limit. Troops having beaten the enemy will want to rest. They must be given as objectives, not those that you think they will reach, but the farthest they could possibly reach."*

**Field Marshal Viscount Allenby of Meggido, Order to XXI Corps, 1917**

## CHAPTER 8 PURSUIT

**A pursuit is a type of offensive action designed to destroy an enemy force attempting to escape.**

Pursuit operations begin when an enemy force attempts to conduct retrograde operations. At that point it becomes most vulnerable to the loss of internal cohesion and complete destruction. An aggressively executed pursuit leaves the enemy trapped, unprepared and unable to defend, faced with the options of surrendering or complete destruction. This type of offensive action is characterized by rapid shifting of units, continuous

day and night movements, hasty attacks, containment of bypassed enemy forces, large numbers of prisoners, and a willingness to forego some synchronization to maintain contact with and pressure on a fleeing enemy. Pursuit requires swift maneuver and attacks by forces to strike the enemy's most vulnerable areas. A successful pursuit requires flexible forces, initiative by commanders at all levels, and the maintenance of a high operational tempo during execution.

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**8-2.** The enemy may conduct a retrograde when successful friendly offensive operations have shattered his defense. In addition, the enemy may deliberately conduct a retrograde when:

- He is reacting to a threat of envelopment.
- He is making adjustment to battlefield dispositions to meet changing situations.
- He is attempting to draw the friendly force into fire sacks, kill zones, or engagement areas.
- He is planning to employ weapons of mass destruction.

Therefore, the friendly force must always consider the enemy's actions whenever it sees an opportunity to conduct a pursuit.

**8-3.** Division is the lowest echelon equipped with the intelligence assets to determine if the enemy is conducting a retrograde. When faced with enemy attempts to break

contact, lower echelons act to maintain contact until a division or corps commander directs them to initiate a pursuit operation.

**8-4.** Unlike an exploitation, which may not focus on the enemy force, the pursuit always focuses on destroying the fleeing enemy force. This is seldom accomplished by directly pushing back the hostile forces on their lines of communications (LOC). The commander in a pursuit tries to combine direct-pressure against the retreating forces with an enveloping or encircling maneuver to place friendly troops across the enemy's lines of retreat. This fixes the enemy in positions where he can be defeated in detail. If it becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield, any type of offensive operation can transition to a pursuit.

**8-5.** The conduct of a pursuit is a calculated risk. Once the pursuit begins, the commander maintains contact with the enemy and pursues retreating enemy forces without further orders. The commander maintains the pursuit as long as the enemy appears disorganized and friendly forces continue to advance. Like exploitation, pursuit tests the audacity and endurance of soldiers and leaders. In both operations, the attacker risks becoming disorganized almost as much as the defender. Extraordinary physical and mental effort is necessary to sustain the pursuit, transition to other operations, and translate tactical success into operational or strategic victory.

**8-6.** The commander must be aware of any approaching culmination point. The enemy is usually falling back on his supply base, and potentially on fresh units, while friendly forces become less effective as they expend resources faster than they can be replaced. Reasons to discontinue the pursuit include the presence of fresh enemy forces, greatly increased resistance, fatigue, dwindling supplies, diversion of friendly units to security missions, and the need to contain bypassed enemy units.

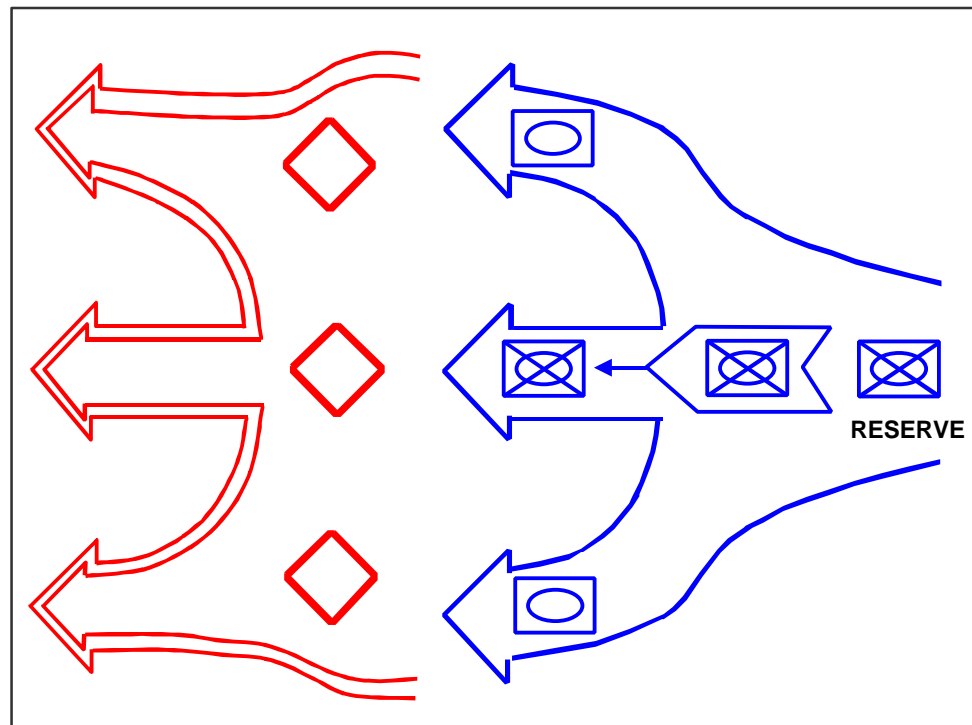
## **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES**

**8-7.** Normally, the commander does not organize specifically for a pursuit ahead of time, although he may plan for a pursuit as a branch or sequel to his offensive operation. Therefore, he must be flexible to react when the situation presents itself. The commander's maneuver and sustainment forces continue their ongoing activities even though he readjusts their priorities to better support the conduct of a pursuit. For most pursuits, the commander organizes his forces into a direct-pressure force, an encircling force, a follow and support force, and a reserve. Each pursuit force also organizes a security force. Given sufficient resources, there can be more than one encircling force. The follow and support force polices the battlefield to prevent the dissipation of the



direct-pressure force's combat power. The duties of a follow and support force are addressed in Appendix B. The reserve allows the commander to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities or respond to enemy counterattacks.

**8-8.** There are two basic organizational options in conducting a pursuit; each involves a direct-pressure force. The first is a frontal pursuit that employs only a direct-pressure force. The second is a combination that uses a direct-pressure force and an encircling force. The combination pursuit is generally more effective.



**Figure 8-1. Frontal Pursuit**

## FRONTAL

**8-9.** In a frontal pursuit, the commander employs only a direct-pressure force to conduct operations along the same retrograde routes used by the enemy. (See Figure 8-1.) The commander chooses this option in two situations. The first situation is when he cannot create an encircling force with enough mobility to get behind the enemy force. The second situation is when he cannot create an encircling force capable of sustaining itself until it links up with the direct-pressure force. Either situation can occur because of restrictive terrain or because an enemy withdraws in a disciplined, cohesive formation and still has significant available combat power.

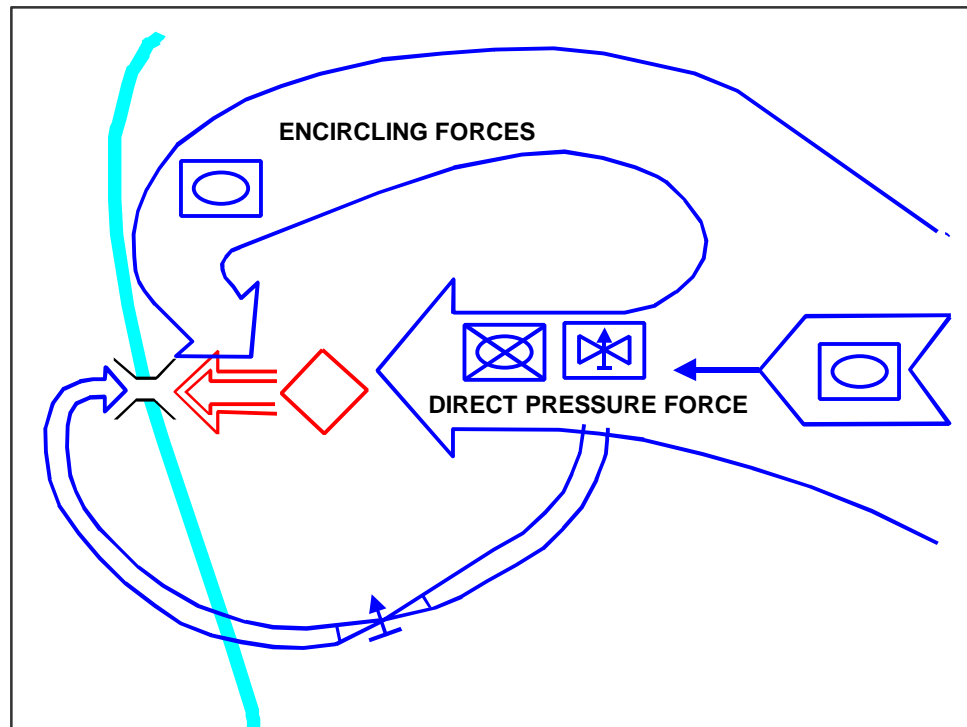


Figure 8-2. Combination Pursuit

## COMBINATION

**8-10.** In the pursuit, the most decisive effects result from combining the frontal pursuit with an encirclement. (See Figure 8-2.) In the combination pursuit, the direct-pressure force initiates a frontal pursuit immediately upon discovery of the enemy's retrograde to slow the enemy (or fix the enemy if possible), to destroy the enemy's sustainment area security force, to maintain constant pressure, and to support the encircling force. The encircling force conducts an envelopment or a turning movement to place itself in a position to block the enemy's escape and trap him between the two forces, which leads to complete annihilation.

**8-11.** The direct-pressure force conducts hasty attacks to maintain contact and apply unrelenting pressure until it has completely destroyed the enemy force. The direct-pressure force prevents enemy disengagement and subsequent reconstitution of the defense and inflicts maximum casualties. It forces the enemy to deploy frequently to delay the direct-pressure force and restricts his ability to disengage and rapidly move away. The direct-pressure force must be at least as mobile as the enemy. Heavy forces are ideally suited to this role, but the commander can employ light forces if the enemy is also foot mobile. The direct-pressure force organizes to conduct a movement to contact

and must be able to conduct a series of hasty attacks. It must be powerful enough to defeat enemy rear guard actions and maintain pressure on the enemy's main body.

**8-12.** The mobility of the encircling force must be equal — and preferably superior — to the withdrawing enemy. If there is no inherent mobility differential, the commander must create one. This differential can also result from the direct-pressure force forcing the enemy to deploy. The commander can enhance and sometimes create this mobility advantage by conducting countermobility operations against the enemy, specifically targeting locations, such as choke points or bridges, that will hinder the fleeing enemy's withdrawal. Heavy, air assault, and airborne forces are well-suited to this mission. Attack helicopters are also effective when used as part of the encircling force. The encircling force must be strong enough to protect itself from the enemy's main body and slow down or stop it until the friendly direct-pressure force can combine with the encircling force to destroy the enemy. It must be capable of mounting a hasty defense without placing itself at risk of annihilation. The encircling force must be self-contained since it normally operates out of supporting range of friendly indirect fire systems. Therefore, it frequently has its supporting artillery attached. The primary mission of the encircling force is to prevent the enemy's escape by trapping him between the encircling force and the direct-pressure force. The commander can assign other missions to the encircling force, such as:

- Reporting terrain conditions and other combat information.
- Destroying the enemy's weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means.
- Linking up with airborne or air assault forces in their airheads.

The commander can assign the encirclement mission, wholly or in part, to available airborne or air assault units because their vertical envelopment capabilities allow friendly forces to be inserted deeper into enemy-controlled territory than would be possible with ground operations.

**8-13.** The direct-pressure and encircling forces require engineer support to create lanes through obstacles, which enables them to move rapidly and continuously. The commander should place his engineers well forward in his movement formations to quickly breach any obstacles that can not be bypassed. Engineers accompanying the encircling force must also be prepared to conduct countermobility and survivability operations.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**8-14.** The commander uses those control measures necessary to retain his tactical options to converge on the most important axis or to redirect his pursuit effort on a new axis. These control measures should be flexible and capable of rapid adjustments to reflect changing conditions. This flexibility is also necessary when engaging advancing enemy reserves or counterattack forces.

**8-15.** Centralized planning and decentralized execution characterize the pursuit. The commander balances the need to prevent fratricide with the need to allow subordinates to take advantage of fleeting opportunities in a pursuit with rapidly moving forces and a rapidly changing situation. The commander designates an AO for each maneuver unit involved in the pursuit. He establishes few control measures for the direct-pressure force other than phase lines and checkpoints because of the pursuit's nature. He uses these phase lines to designate a forward and rearward boundary for the direct-pressure force. The forward boundary relieves the direct-pressure force of any responsibility beyond the forward boundary. It also gives the higher headquarters flexibility to deal with the encircling force and enemy elements located beyond that forward boundary. The rear

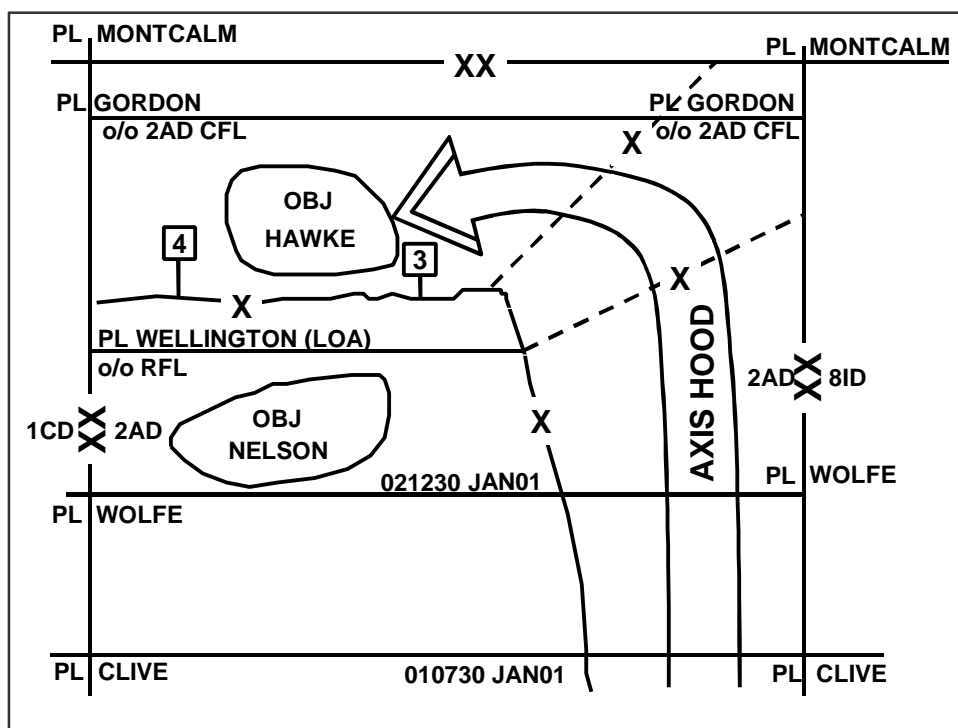


Figure 8-3. Pursuit Control Measures

boundary becomes the boundary between the direct-pressure force and the follow and support force.

**8-16.** If the encircling force is a ground element, the control measures are almost identical to those of an envelopment. The commander must designate a route, an axis of advance, or an AO adjacent to that of the direct-pressure force to allow the encircling force to move parallel to and eventually get ahead of the fleeing enemy force. He designates a terrain objective as a guide for the encircling force. (See Objective HAWKE in Figure 8-3.) However, he may change this objective rapidly and frequently based on the progress of the encircling force and the enemy. The objective should be a piece of ground that provides the encircling force good, defensible terrain that cannot be easily bypassed by the enemy. The commander often selects choke points, such as defiles and bridges, as objectives for his encircling force.

**8-17.** The commander establishes a boundary or a restricted fire line between the encircling force and the direct-pressure force before the encircling force reaches its objective. He establishes other FSCM around the area currently occupied by the encircling force to relieve it of unnecessary fire support coordination responsibilities. He directs the conduct of security operations beyond the encircling force, allowing it to engage the withdrawing enemy without devoting resources to flank and rear security. The commander establishes additional control measures to control the convergence of both elements of the friendly force, such as phase lines and contact points.

## PLANNING FOR A PURSUIT

**8-18.** The commander anticipates an enemy retrograde operation as either a branch or a sequel to the plan. The plan should identify possible direct-pressure, encircling, follow and support, and reserve forces and issue on-order or be-prepared missions to these forces. The commander should plan on employing the maximum number of available combat troops in the pursuit. He bases the details of his plan based on the enemy's anticipated actions, the combat formation of the attacking troops, and the amount of planning time available. The commander also considers:

- Possible routes the enemy might use in the conduct of his retrograde operations.
- Scheme of maneuver.
- Availability and condition of pursuit routes.
- Available forces.
- Critical terrain features.
- Use of reconnaissance and security forces.
- Allocation of precision-guided munitions and aviation support.

- Availability of CS and CSS resources.

Pursuit planning must address the possibility of defending temporarily during operational pauses while making preparations to continue the pursuit or to consolidate gains.

**8-19.** The commander must specifically address how to detect the enemy retrograde operations; otherwise, the enemy may succeed in breaking contact. The commander relies on active reconnaissance, an understanding of enemy tactics, and knowledge of the current tactical situation. He must watch for the following signs that indicate the enemy is preparing to conduct a retrograde: The enemy —

- Lacks the capability to maintain his position or cohesion.
- Conducts limited local counterattacks.
- Intensifies his reconnaissance and intelligence efforts.
- Increases the amount of rearward movements and changes the type of elements conducting them, especially by fire support and reserves.
- Prepares his facilities, installations, equipment, and supply stockpiles for demolition and destruction.
- Fire decreases in intensity and effectiveness through the AO.
- Increases his fires in one or more individual sectors of the front, which does not appear to be in accord with the developing situation, and at a time when the amount of defensive fires seem to be decreasing.

The presence or absence of any of the above signs may not necessarily indicate the start of a retrograde operation. The enemy could be attempting to draw friendly forces into an ambush or setting up a counterattack as part of his defensive scheme. The decision of when to start a pursuit is part of the art of tactics.

**8-20.** When the commander initiates a pursuit, he often creates the encircling force from uncommitted or reserve elements. Normally, these types of forces do not have fire support assets allocated to them. The commander must plan how to redistribute his fire support assets to properly support the encircling force. Attack helicopters and close air support (CAS) are well-suited to support the encircling force.

**8-21.** Engineer mobility and countermobility assets are instrumental in sustaining the rate of advance and hindering the enemy's withdrawal. Engineers prepare the route of advance and support the lateral dispersion of units transitioning to the pursuit and the movement of the reserve. During the pursuit, the commander must plan for his engineers to provide assault bridging and emergency road repairs to sustain the tempo of the pursuit. The commander also plans to use his engineer assets to block any bypassed enemy's withdrawal routes through the use of antitank and command-operated mines, demolitions, and obstacles.

**8-22.** Logistics units should plan for increases in the demand for fuel and maintenance as the tempo of operations inherent to a pursuit increases. In the pursuit, priority of logistics normally goes to units having the greatest success. Logistics planners need to anticipate success since the depth of the pursuit depends on the capability of logistics assets to support the operation. Logistics planners are particularly concerned with the support of the encircling force, such as casualty evacuation over possibly unsecured LOC. The commander may need aerial resupply or heavily guarded convoys to support this force. Security for logistics convoys and the LOC are major planning considerations.

**8-23.** The commander uses all available logistics assets to provide essential support to the force pursuing the enemy. His pursuit plans must result in a force prepared to conduct wide-ranging operations using all available maneuver assets throughout his AO to complete the destruction and moral collapse of the enemy force.

## **EXECUTION OF A PURSUIT**

**8-24.** The ultimate goal of a pursuit is to trap the withdrawing enemy between the direct-pressure and the encircling forces or a major geographic barrier — such as an unfordable river — complete the encirclement, and defeat him in detail. The timely and correct decision to initiate a pursuit is critical to its success. If the enemy begins a retrograde undetected, he avoids the constant pressure that results in the disruption of that operation. The commander expects the enemy to conduct retrograde operations at times advantageous to him — usually at night or during bad weather — so he initiates timely actions to maintain contact with the enemy.

**8-25.** At the first indication of an enemy retrograde, the brigade or lower-echelon commander who discovers the enemy's rearward movement acts to maintain contact with the enemy across a wide area without waiting for orders from higher headquarters. This ensures that the enemy is not allowed to break contact and conduct an orderly retirement. These forces in contact constitute the nucleus of the direct-pressure force. As the situation permits, they reform into a movement column with reconnaissance and security elements in the lead and, if necessary, to the flank. The actions of the direct-pressure force should facilitate the commitment of an encircling force that moves parallel to the rearward-moving enemy. The depth of the pursuit depends on the size of the forces involved. Even though a division commander can make the decision to initiate a pursuit, he must inform his higher commander of his intentions.

**8-26.** A pursuit is often conducted as a series of encirclements in which successive portions of the fleeing enemy are intercepted, cut off from outside support, and captured or destroyed. (Appendix D discusses encirclement operations.) The direct-pressure force conducts a series of hasty attacks to destroy the enemy's rear security force, maintain constant pressure on the enemy's main body, and slow the enemy's withdrawal. At every opportunity, the direct-pressure force fixes, slows down, and destroys enemy elements, provided such actions do not interfere with its primary mission of maintaining constant pressure on the enemy's main body. The direct-pressure force can bypass large enemy forces if they can be handed off to follow and support units or if they do not pose a risk to the direct-pressure force.

**8-27.** As soon as the commander designates a unit as the encircling force and directs its actions, the force moves as swiftly as possible by the most advantageous routes to cut off the enemy's retreat. If the encircling force can not move farther and faster than the enemy, it attacks the enemy's main body from the flank. When this occurs, the commander should constitute and dispatch a new encircling force.

#### **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**8-28.** During a pursuit, the reconnaissance effort is intensive. Reconnaissance elements concentrate on all routes the enemy could use during the conduct of a retrograde operation. As the pursuit develops, these elements provide information on the disposition of retreating enemy formations and on the forward movement of his reserves. Because of the potential depth of the operation, the tactical situation during a pursuit may become obscure. Much of the combat information needed during a pursuit is located behind the fleeing enemy force. Therefore, air reconnaissance backed by technical intelligence systems is vital to the overall reconnaissance effort. It can determine —

- The beginning of the rearward movement of enemy sustainment forces.
- The composition of retrograding forces and their direction of movement.
- The composition and direction of enemy reserve forces moving forward.
- The nature of obstacles and intermediate defensive positions.

Information about fresh enemy reserves and prepared positions is vital at the stage when a pursuit force may be approaching a culminating point because it may be the basis for terminating the pursuit.

**8-29.** The direct-pressure force normally sends out an advance guard or a covering force. The purpose of this security force is to prevent the enemy from ambushing the main body of the direct-pressure force and to overrun or bypass small enemy forces. The



security element moves on multiple avenues of advance. If it encounters enemy units beyond its capacity to handle, it conducts actions on contact to further develop the situation. The commander uses combat information provided by of these actions on contact to guide the main body of the direct-pressure force to destroy withdrawing enemy forces. These actions of the direct-pressure force may or may not be in conjunction with the actions of any encircling force.

**8-30.** The primary mission of reconnaissance assets of the encircling force is to find routes for the encircling force to allow it to move behind withdrawing enemy units and establish blocking positions. This mission may force these reconnaissance assets to operate outside the supporting range of the main body as they try to maneuver behind the retrograding enemy force. The encircling force avoids combat when possible until it reaches its assigned objective area. However, enroute to its objective, it overruns any small enemy positions while bypassing larger enemy units. Forward security elements of the encircling force conduct activities to prevent the enemy from interfering with the forward movement of the encircling force's main body. These security elements move rapidly along all available roads or routes and overrun or bypass small enemy pockets of resistance. If they encounter strongly held enemy positions, they attempt to find routes around or through these positions. The encircling force can then avoid these enemy positions and occupy blocking positions before withdrawing enemy forces can reach them. If necessary, the encircling force organizes a hasty defense behind the enemy to block his retreat.

#### **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

**8-31.** Keeping the enemy from reconstituting an effective defense is critical to success. Constant pressure by direct-pressure forces and echelon fire support systems disrupt and weaken the enemy. The commander uses lethal and nonlethal direct and indirect fires to keep pressure on the enemy. The enemy commander must not be allowed to adjust his dispositions to counter the actions of the friendly force. Artillery fire and air strikes harass and disrupt the enemy's attempts to move engaged forces to the rear or bring previously uncommitted forces into action. In a pursuit, decisive operations may include the ground maneuver of the direct-pressure or the encircling force. Fire support targets in a pursuit include fires on enemy columns and troop or vehicle concentrations at road junctions, defiles, bridges, and river crossings. They also include the repulsion of enemy counterattacks, destruction or delay of enemy reserves, and destruction of the enemy's fire support means. The commander conducts offensive information operations against

the enemy's C<sup>2</sup> system as an integral part of this disruption process, with emphasis on destroying or degrading the enemy's capability to reconstitute and synchronize an effective defense.

#### **FIX THE ENEMY**

**8-32.** The commander fixes a withdrawing enemy using movement and fires. If the direct-pressure force disrupts the enemy's C<sup>2</sup> system, his ability to counter friendly efforts is significantly degraded, and the goal of fixing the enemy is much easier to accomplish.

**8-33.** The enemy attempts to use his reserves to restore the integrity of his defenses or prevent his withdrawing force from being overrun. Fixing enemy reserves is essential to the pursuit's success and is normally the focus of echelon shaping operations. The direct-pressure force fixes enemy reserves in place or slows them down so that they remain outside supporting distance until the withdrawing enemy force is completely annihilated.

#### **MANEUVER**

**8-34.** To execute the pursuit, the commander normally combines a frontal pursuit with an encirclement. The direct-pressure force conducting the frontal pursuit advances in a column formation as quickly as possible. After a penetration, existing gaps between the different units of the direct-pressure force are likely to increase in size. Aware of the vulnerability of his open flanks in this situation, the commander must deploy his reserves where they can respond to dangers on his flanks. He does not expect a uniform rate of advance on all axes. Some columns may move rapidly while others are still engaged in penetrating the enemy's rear guard defensive positions or meeting enemy counterattacks.

**8-35.** The commander does everything possible to allow his encircling force to move behind the withdrawing enemy and trap the bulk of that enemy force between the encircling force and the direct-pressure force. The direct-pressure force maintains enough pressure on the withdrawing enemy force so that the encircling force can envelop him. To perform this task, the direct-pressure force must be strong enough to overcome any enemy rear guard before the enemy's main body can make a successful withdrawal. Once in position the encircling force defends or attacks as necessary, responding to the enemy's actions and those of the direct-pressure force to complete the enemy's encirclement.

**8-36.** The enemy must not be given time to reorganize for an all-around defense after being encircled. If the enemy forms a perimeter, the pursuing commander must repeatedly split it into smaller elements until the encircled enemy force is destroyed. If time is not critical, the commander can keep the encirclement closed, defeat enemy breakout attempts, and weaken the enemy by fires alone. He can greatly accelerate the collapse of a large, encircled enemy force by using precision-guided weapons and improved conventional munitions in mass. (Appendix D addresses the reduction of an encircled enemy force.) If the resulting encirclement does not completely destroy the withdrawing enemy force, the commander conducts additional pursuit operations until the enemy's destruction is complete.

#### **FOLLOW THROUGH**

**8-37.** Once the commander initiates a pursuit, he continues pursuing the enemy until a higher commander terminates the pursuit. Conditions under which a higher commander may terminate a pursuit include the following:

- The enemy is annihilated or captured and resistance has ceased.
- The pursuing force has fixed the enemy for follow-on forces.
- The pursuing force has reached a culminating point.

**8-38.** A pursuit may often transition into other types of offensive and defensive operations. Forces conducting a pursuit execute hasty attacks if the enemy attempts to reorganize, move to exploitation to capitalize on the success of the attack, and then move back into pursuit. Forces conducting a pursuit may also transition into a defensive operation if the pursuing force reaches a culminating point. This usually occurs when the enemy introduces strong reinforcements in preparation for a counteroffensive.

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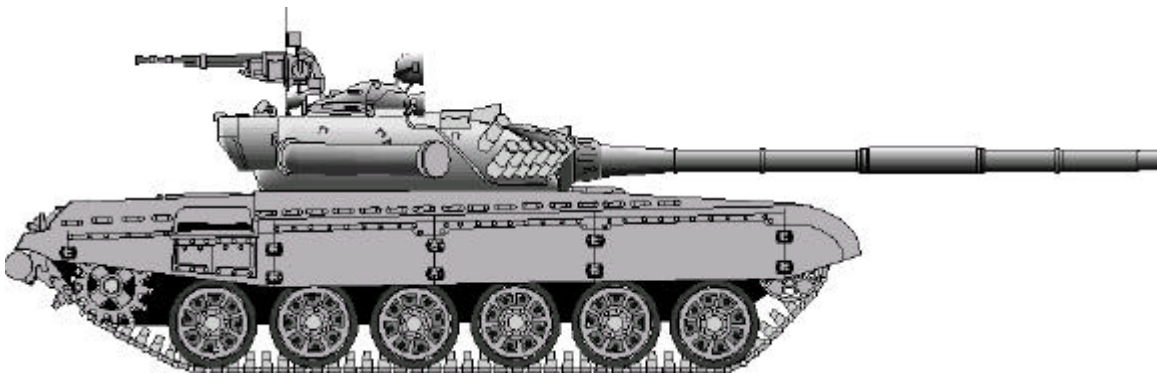
# PART THREE: DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

**Chapter 9: The Basics of the Defense**

**Chapter 10: Area Defense**

**Chapter 11: Mobile Defense**

**Chapter 12: Retrograde operations**



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*“The defensive is able more than before to carry out its original mission, which is to break the strength of the attacker, ... And lead finally to the offensive, which is the only decisive form of warfare.”*

**MARSHAL Von Leeb, *Defense***

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*"So the defensive form of war is not a simple shield, but a shield made up of well-directed blows."*

**Carl von Clausewitz, *On War***

## CHAPTER 9

# BASICS OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

**The defense is a type of military action designed to defeat an attacker and prevent him from achieving his objectives.** While the offense is the most decisive category of combat operation, the defense is the stronger category. The basic task of the defense is to force the enemy to attack under unfavorable circumstances. The commander wants to pick the place where the fight occurs, preparing the area over which the battle will be fought while denying the enemy the ability to obtain adequate intelligence. The reasons for conducting defensive operations include:

- Surprise action by the enemy.
- Cause an enemy attack to fail.
- Gain time.
- Concentrate combat power elsewhere.
- Increase the enemy's vulnerability by forcing him to concentrate his forces.
- Attrit or fix the enemy as a prelude to offensive operations.
- Retain decisive terrain or deny a vital area to the enemy.
- Prepare to resume the offense.

### HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

**9-2.** The following historical example illustrates how the conduct of a defense can attrit and fix an enemy as a prelude to offensive actions.

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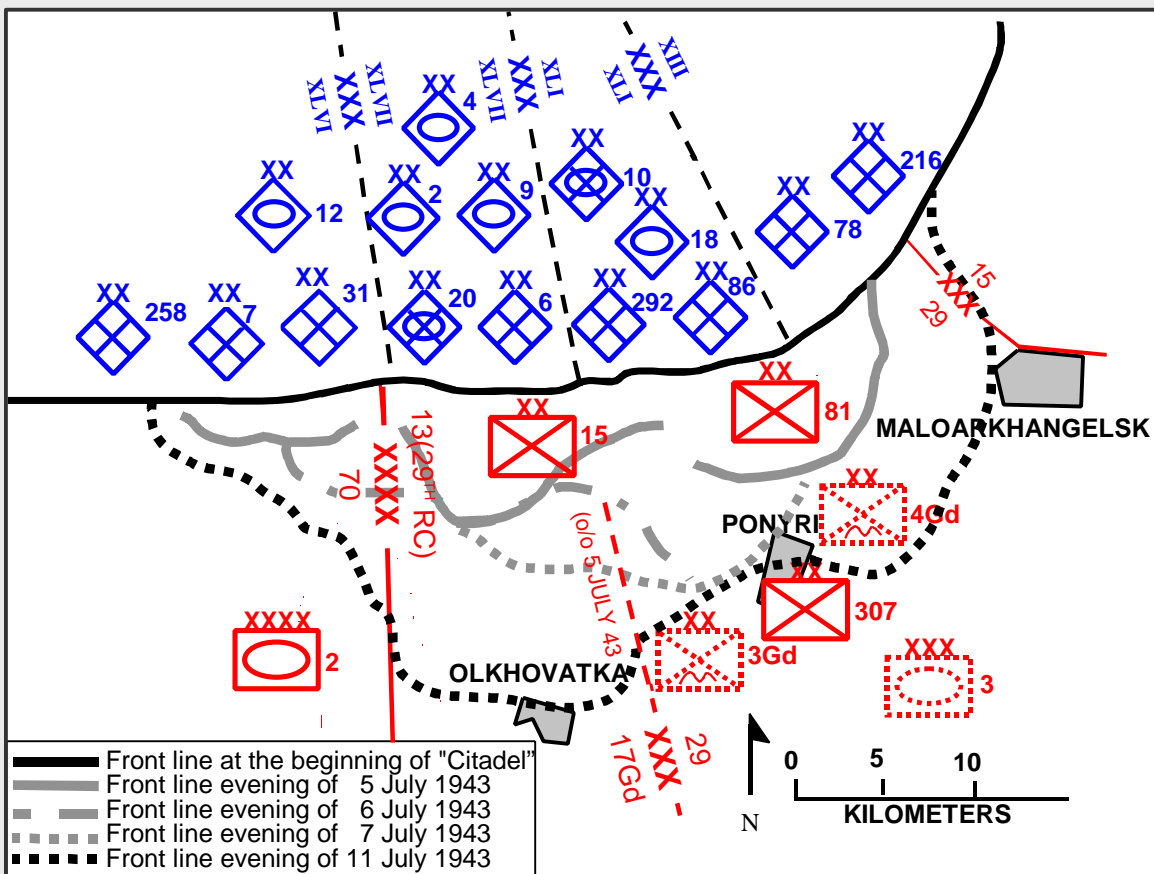
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### THE BATTLE OF KURSK

#### July 1943

Using an area defense, the Red Army defeated the German Army's last Eastern Front operational level attack at Kursk. The Red Army maximized its defensive advantage through its use of mass, security, objective, and offensive.

Soviet intelligence discovered the German offensive objective and concept: a double envelopment of the salient at Kursk, attacking its shoulders with panzer-heavy forces. The Red Army massed its forces in the most threatened areas. The Soviets reinforced the two fronts defending the salient, prepared for defensive operations, and established strategic reserves behind the salient. Within the salient, they weighted the forward defenses on the northern and southern shoulders and developed their defenses in depth, tying them carefully to the terrain and organizing infantry positions for all-around defense. Above all, they organized for antitank defense, with mutually supporting positions and mobile counterattack forces at all levels. Nearly 6,000 antitank (AT) guns and 3,300 tanks packed the defense.



The German attack in the northern part of the salient would fall on the 13th Army. The 13th Army consisted of 12 rifle divisions (RDs) organized into four rifle corps (RCs) supported by 700 guns, separate tank brigades, assault gun regiments, and antitank regiments. Within 30 kilometers of the front, the 13th Army established three defensive belts of fortifications. Within each belt there were large numbers of mutually supporting antitank supporting positions. Each position consisted of four to six AT guns with close-in protection provided by infantry, machine guns, and obstacles.

The 29th RC occupied the 13th Army's main defensive position in a sector 19 kilometers wide and 15 kilometers deep, with the 15th RC on its right, the 70th Army on its left, and the 17th Guards Rifle Corps (GRC) rearward in the army second echelon. At the start of the battle, the 29th RC consisted of three rifle divisions (the 15th, 81st, and 307th), with supporting tank and artillery units. It deployed the 15th RD and 81st RD, with 12 to 15 ATSPs each, as the corps' first echelon. The 307th RD was the corps' second echelon. Both first-echelon divisions also deployed in two echelons. Each division established a



battalion security force to its front.

On 5 July 1943, after an exchange of artillery preparation and counter preparation fires, the German *292nd* and *86th Infantry Divisions* (IDs) reinforced by 18th Panzer Division (PzD) tanks, attacked the 81st RD. By noon they had penetrated the first-echelon regiments at a heavy cost in tanks. On the 29th RC's left flank, the *20th Panzergrenadier Division* (PzGrenD) and the *6th ID* attacked and exposed the 15th RD's left flank. The 13th Army commander directed local reserves to support the 81st RD, while he sent the 2nd Tank Army with two tank corps to stabilize the left of the 29th RC. The Germans forced the 81st RD's first-echelon regiments back into the division second-echelon regiment that afternoon. A German attack that evening penetrated the left of the 81st RD's sector, but 13th Army reinforcements restored their front. Meanwhile, the 15th RD's right flank held up expansion of the German success. The 13th Army's reinforcements allowed the 29th RC to stabilize the situation, stopping the advancing German forces in the army's second defensive belt. That night, the 15th RD, located 15 kilometers west of the rest of the 29th RC, was transferred to the 17th GRC. The 29th RC destroyed 110 German tanks out of the 586 destroyed that day and still held the 13th Army's second defensive line. However, the front commander's main effort was now the 17th GRC's sector, where the *2nd PzD* and the *9th PzD* were now deploying. The 29th RC became a secondary effort. The Red Army designated, sustained, and shifted its decisive operation as necessary.

The 81st RD counterattacked on 6 July to buy time for the defense. By noon, the Germans had committed two more divisions, so the 81st RD withdrew. The 29th RC had been reinforced by nearly 380 artillery and antitank guns and the 3rd Tank Corps (TC). The German *292nd ID* and *18th PzD* continued their attack on 7 July. The 307th RD's first echelon repelled four assaults, but when elements of two more German divisions joined the fifth assault, it penetrated the first-echelon positions by noon. The 307th, reinforced with tanks, counterattacked to restore the situation. During the rest of the day, positions repeatedly changed hands. That night, the 13th Army commander reinforced the 29th RC with additional tank forces and the 4th Guards Airborne Division (GAD). On 8 July, a reinforced 307th RD restored the left of its sector, but a German counterattack at 1800 undid part of the day's work. During the night, the 13th Army again reinforced the 29th RC with the 3rd GAD. On 9 July the Germans surrounded one 307th RD regiment; the 4th GAD relieved the encirclement after several hours of fighting.

The Germans attacked again on 10 July: the *10th PzGrenD* forced the 307th RD and 4th GAD elements back. The German assault lasted six hours, after which the 29th RC withdrew the 307th RD and defended with the 3rd and 4th GADs. The German assaults continued on 11 July. On 12 July, the Red Army launched a large-scale counteroffensive on the northern side of the salient. This counteroffensive, coupled with the climactic tank battle of Prokhorovka on the southern part of the Kursk salient on the same day, ended the German offensive. Red Army actions during this period illustrated the fact that an area defense is not static in nature but involves dynamic actions.

During this week of intense defensive combat, the 29th RC conducted an area defense, making the Germans pay so much for every gain that they reached their culminating point short of Kursk. Tested by nine German divisions, the 29th RC was able to keep German forces from breaking through in its sector, despite having its initial three divisions rendered combat-ineffective. In the course of the defense, the 29th RC inflicted 10,700 German casualties and destroyed an estimated 220 tanks and 71 guns. Key to the conduct of that defense was the construction of mutually supporting antitank positions, organized for all-around defense, with extensive engineer works to enhance the terrain. The 29th RC employed its attached forces aggressively, creating combined arms teams to hold terrain or maneuver against German forces within the defensive belt. It employed counterattacks to retake key terrain or gain time to develop defenses.

## TYPES OF DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

**9-3.** There are three basic types of defensive actions: the area defense, the mobile defense, and the retrograde. These three types have significantly different concepts and pose significantly different problems. Therefore, each type of defensive action must be dealt with differently when planning and executing the defense. Although the names of these types of defensive actions convey the overall aim of a selected defensive operation, each typically contains elements of the other and combines static and dynamic elements.

**9-4.** Although on the defense, the commander remains alert for opportunities to attack the enemy at every opportunity whenever resources permit. Within a defensive posture, the defending commander may conduct a spoiling attack or a counterattack, if permitted to do so by the factors of METT-TC. Chapter 6 discusses these two subordinate forms of an attack.

### AREA DEFENSE

**9-12. The area defense is a type of defensive action that concentrates on denying an enemy force access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright.** The focus of the area defense is on retaining terrain where the bulk of the defending force positions itself in mutually supporting, prepared positions. Units maintain their positions and control the terrain between these positions. The defeat mechanism is fires into engagement areas possibly supplemented by a counterattack. The reserve may or may not be a part of the defeat mechanism. The commander can use his reserve to reinforce fires; add depth, block, or restore the position by counterattack; seize the initiative; and destroy enemy forces. Units at all echelons can conduct an area defense. Chapter 9 discusses the area defense.

### MOBILE DEFENSE

**9-13. The mobile defense is a type of defensive action that concentrates on the destruction or defeat of the enemy through a decisive attack by a striking force.** The mobile defense focuses on defeating or destroying the enemy by allowing him to advance to a point where he is exposed to a decisive counterattack by the striking force. The defeat mechanism is a counterattack conducted by the striking force. The striking force is a dedicated decisive force constituting the bulk of available combat power. A fixing force supplements the striking force. The commander uses his fixing force to hold attacking enemy forces in position, to help channel attacking enemy forces into ambush areas, and to retain areas from which to launch the striking force.

**9-14.** A mobile defense requires considerable depth in the area of operations. The commander must be able to shape the battlefield, causing the enemy to overextend his lines of communication, expose his flanks, and dissipate his combat power. Likewise, the commander must be able to move around and behind the enemy force he intends to cut off and destroy. Corps and larger formations normally execute mobile defenses, although a division may conduct a mobile defense. Subordinate echelons participate as part of the fixing force or the striking force. Chapter 10 discusses the mobile defense.

## RETROGRADE

**9-15. The retrograde is a type of defensive action that involves organized movement away from the enemy.** The enemy may force these operations, or a commander may execute them voluntarily. In either case, it must be approved by the higher commander of the force executing the retrograde. The retrograde is a transitional operation; it is not conducted in isolation. It is part of a larger scheme of maneuver designed to regain the initiative and defeat the enemy. Chapter 11 further discusses the retrograde.

## COMMON DEFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

**9-16.** The commander controls the defense by using control measures to provide the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation and allow the defending commander to rapidly concentrate the effects of his combat power as necessary. Defensive control measures within a commander's AO include his designation of his security area, the battle handover line (BHL), and the main battle area (MBA) with its associated forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). (Chapter 13 discusses security operations and Chapter 16 discusses the use of a BHL.) The commander can use battle positions and additional direct fire control and fire support coordinating measures in addition to those control measures introduced in Chapter 3 to further synchronize the employment of his combat power.

## MAIN BATTLE AREA

**9-17. The main battle area (MBA) is the area where the commander intends to deploy the bulk of his combat power and conduct his decisive operations to defeat an attacking enemy.** In the defense, the commander's major advantage is that he normally selects the ground on which the battle takes place. He positions his forces in mutually supporting positions in depth to absorb enemy penetrations or deflect them into prepared engagement areas, defeating the enemy's attack by concentrating the effects of overwhelming combat power. The natural defensive strength of

the position has a direct bearing on the distribution of forces in relation to both frontage and depth. In addition, defending units typically employ field fortifications and obstacles to improve the terrain's natural defensive strength. The MBA also includes the area where the defending force creates an opportunity to deliver a decisive counterattack to defeat or destroy the enemy.

**9-18.** The MBA extends from the FEBA to the unit's rear boundary. The commander locates his subordinate unit boundaries along identifiable terrain features and extends them out beyond the FLOT by establishing forward boundaries. Unit boundaries should not split avenues of approach. The commander selects the MBA based on the IPB and his own analysis using the factors of METT-TC. The IPB process indicates how the enemy will most likely use the available avenues of approach.

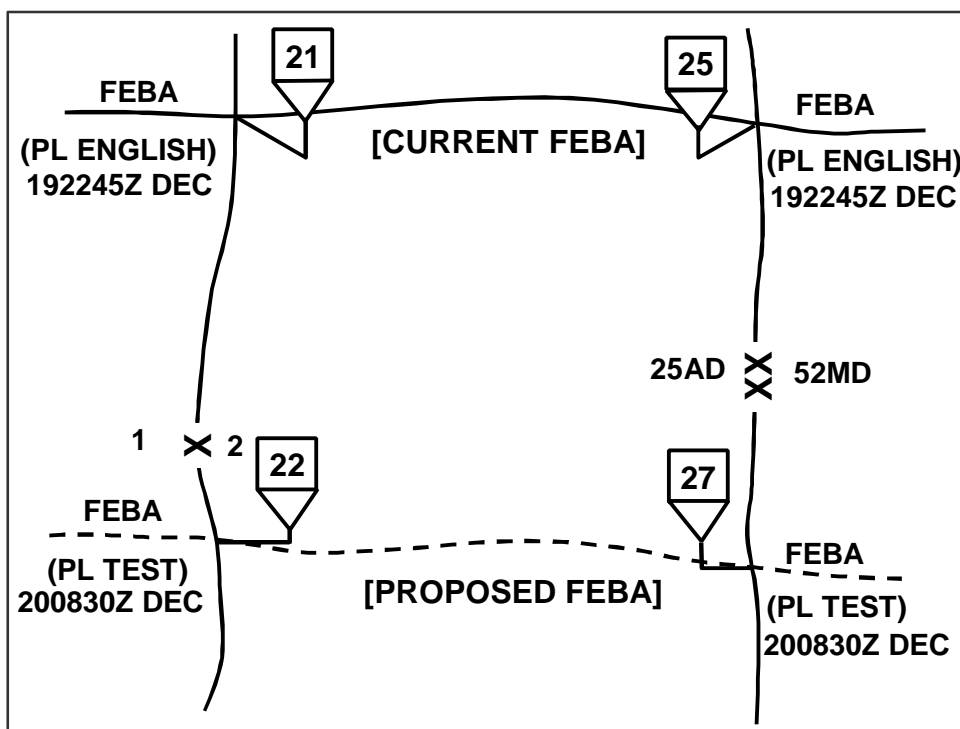


Figure 9-1. Forward Edge of the Battle Area

#### FORWARD EDGE OF THE BATTLE AREA

**9-19.** The forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) is a defensive control measure that marks the forward edge of the terrain where the decisive defensive operation will be fought if that decisive operation includes close combat. The FEBA is not a boundary, but conveys the commander's intent. It marks the foremost limits of the areas in which the preponderance of ground combat units d e-

ploy, excluding the areas in which security forces are operating. MBA forces can temporarily move forward of the FEBA to expedite the retrograde operations of security forces. The commander designates a FEBA to coordinate fire support and to maneuver his forces. A phase line designating the forward-most point of the MBA indicates the FEBA. The FEBA shows the senior commander's planned limit for the effects of direct fires by defending forces. Defending units must address this area in their scheme of maneuver and exchange information regarding tactical plans at the coordinating points. The current FEBA and a proposed FEBA are graphically depicted in Figure 9-5.

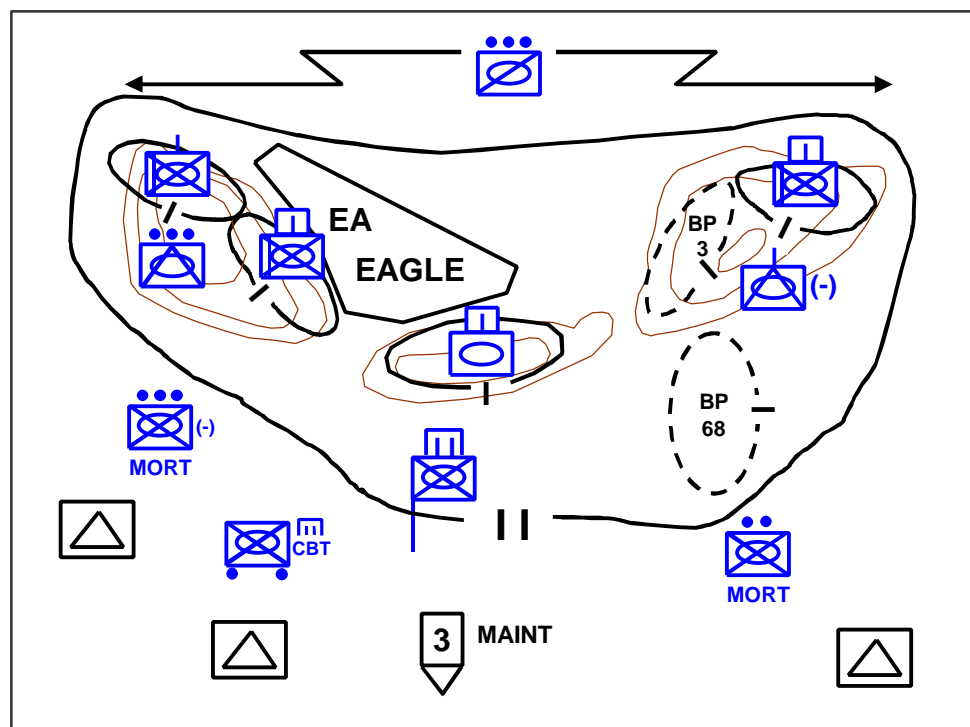
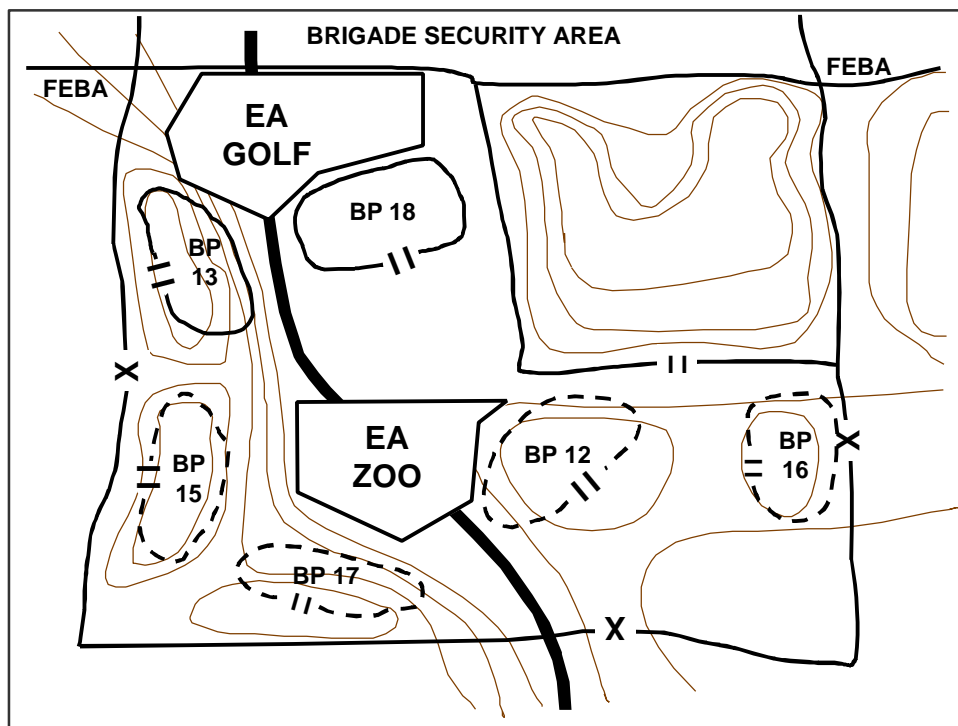


Figure 9-2. Task Force Battle Position

## BATTLE POSITIONS

**9-13. A battle position is a defensive location oriented on a likely enemy avenue of approach.** The battle position is an intent graphic that depicts the location and general orientation of the majority of the defending forces. A commander's use of a battle position does not direct the position of the subordinate's entire force within its bounds since it is not an AO. (See Figure 9-2.) Units as large as battalion task forces and as small as squads or sections use battle positions. They may occupy the topographical crest of a hill, a forward slope, a reverse slope, or a combination of these areas. The commander selects his positions based on terrain, enemy capabilities, and friendly

capabilities. A commander can assign all of his subordinates battle positions within his AO or employ them in combination with areas of operation. (See Figure 9-3.)



**Figure 9-3. AO and Battle Position Control Measures Used in Combination**

**9-14.** The commander may assign his subordinates battle positions in situations when he needs to retain a greater degree of control over the maneuver of his subordinate units than what he has with only an AO, as he controls maneuver outside the general location of the battle position. He may assign multiple battle positions to a single unit, which allows that subordinate unit to maneuver between battle positions. The commander specifies mission and engagement criteria to the unit assigned to a battle position. Security, CS, and CSS forces may operate outside a unit's battle position.

**9-15.** Battle positions are not normally held at all costs. The commander assigning a unit to a battle position should specify when and under what conditions the unit can displace from the position. If a unit is ordered to defend a battle position, its commander has the option of moving off the battle position. If that unit is directed to retain a battle position, its commander needs to know the specific conditions that must exist before his unit can displace.

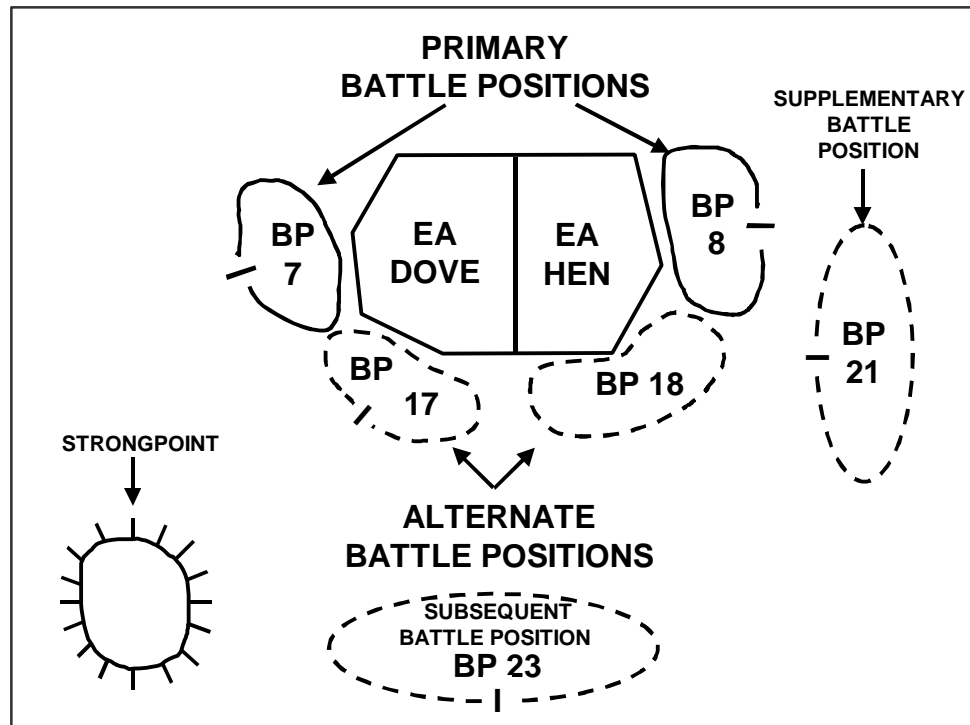


Figure 9-4. Five Kinds of Battle Positions

**9-16.** There are five kinds of battle positions — primary, alternate, supplementary, subsequent, and strongpoint. (See Figure 9-4.) When assigning battle positions, the commander always designates the primary battle position. Alternate, supplementary, and subsequent positions should be designated and prepared as time and other resources permit.

**9-17.** The *primary position* is the position that covers the enemy's most likely avenue of approach into the AO. It is the best position from which to accomplish the assigned mission, such as cover an engagement area.

**9-18.** An *alternate position* is a defensive position that the commander assigns to a unit or weapon for occupation when the primary position becomes untenable or unsuitable for carrying out the assigned task. He locates alternate positions so the occupant can continue to fulfill his original task, such as cover the same avenue of approach or engagement area as the primary position. These positions increase the defender's survivability by allowing him to engage the enemy from multiple positions. For example, a unit moves to its alternate positions when the enemy brings suppressive fires on the primary positions.

**9-19. A supplementary position** is a defensive position located within a unit's assigned AO that provides the best sectors of fire and defensive terrain along an avenue of approach that is not the primary avenue along which the enemy is expected to attack. For example, an avenue of approach into a unit's AO from one of its flanks normally requires establishing supplementary positions to allow a unit or weapon system to engage enemy forces traveling along that avenue.

**9-20. A subsequent position** is a position that a unit expects to move to during the course of battle. A defending unit may have a series of subsequent positions. Subsequent positions can also have primary, alternate, and supplementary positions associated with them.

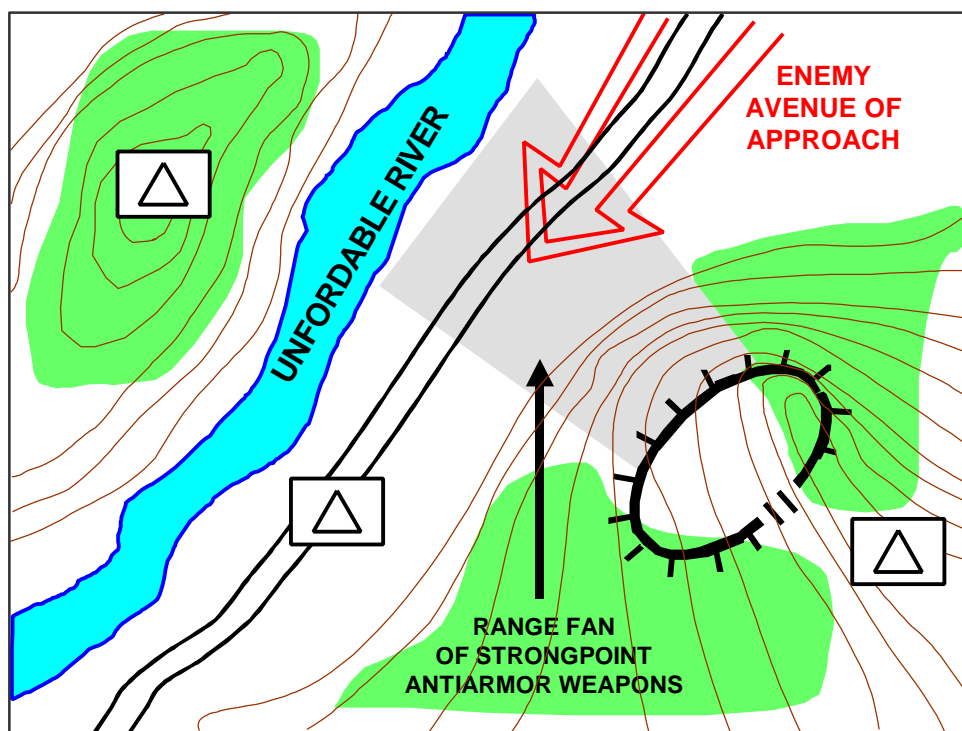


Figure 9-5. Strongpoint Defense

**9-21. A strongpoint** is a heavily fortified battle position tied to a natural or reinforcing obstacle to create an anchor for the defense or to deny the enemy decisive or key terrain. The commander prepares a strongpoint for all-around defense. (See Figure 9-5.) The commander positions strongpoints on key or decisive terrain as necessary. Positions are prepared for all weapon systems, vehicles, soldiers,

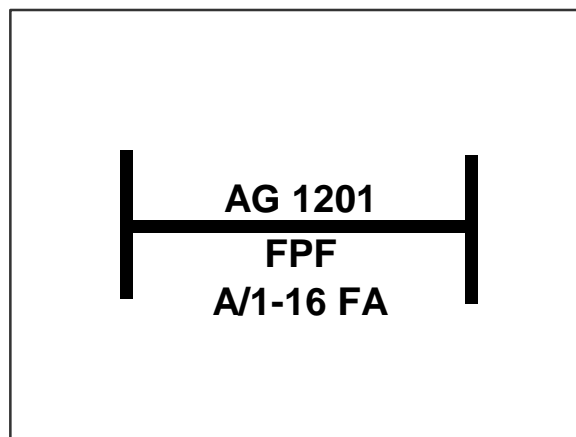


and supplies. The commander also establishes a strongpoint when he anticipates that enemy actions will isolate a defending force retaining terrain critical to the defense.

**9-22.** Before assigning a strongpoint mission, the commander must ensure that the strongpoint force has sufficient time and resources to construct the position. Strongpoint construction requires significant engineer support. A minimally effective strongpoint typically requires a one-day effort from an engineer unit the same size as the unit defending the strongpoint. Normally, companies and battalions occupy strongpoints, although brigades may construct them. The commander does not normally establish strong points for units smaller than company size. This is because of the inability of a platoon or squad to secure a perimeter large enough to encompass all required assets and supplies.

#### **FIRE SUPPORT COORDINATION MEASURES**

**9-23.** The commander tries to engage the enemy at extended ranges and attrit him as his attack advances. To control indirect fires in the defense, the commander uses those common fire support coordination measures (FSCM) introduced in Chapter 3. He can also employ final protective fires, a FSCM that only applies to the defense.



**Figure 9-6. Final Protective Fire**

**9-24. Final protective fires (FPFs) are immediately available preplanned barriers of direct and indirect fire designed to provide close protection to positions and installations by impeding enemy movement across defensive lines, battle positions, or areas.** The commander can only assign each firing element or system a single FPF. When the enemy initiates his final assault into a defensive position, the defending unit initiates its FPFs to kill enemy infantry soldiers and suppress his armored vehicles. Selected crew-served weapons fire along predesignated final protective lines (FPLs) to break up infantry assaults. Figure 9-6 depicts a FPF.

#### **DIRECT FIRE CONTROL MEASURES**

**9-25.** The commander engages the enemy with all available defensive fires when he enters the defending unit's engagement area. In addition to the direct fire control mea-

ures discussed in Chapter 3, engagement areas, trigger lines, and disengagement lines are peculiar to the defense. (See Figure 9-7.)

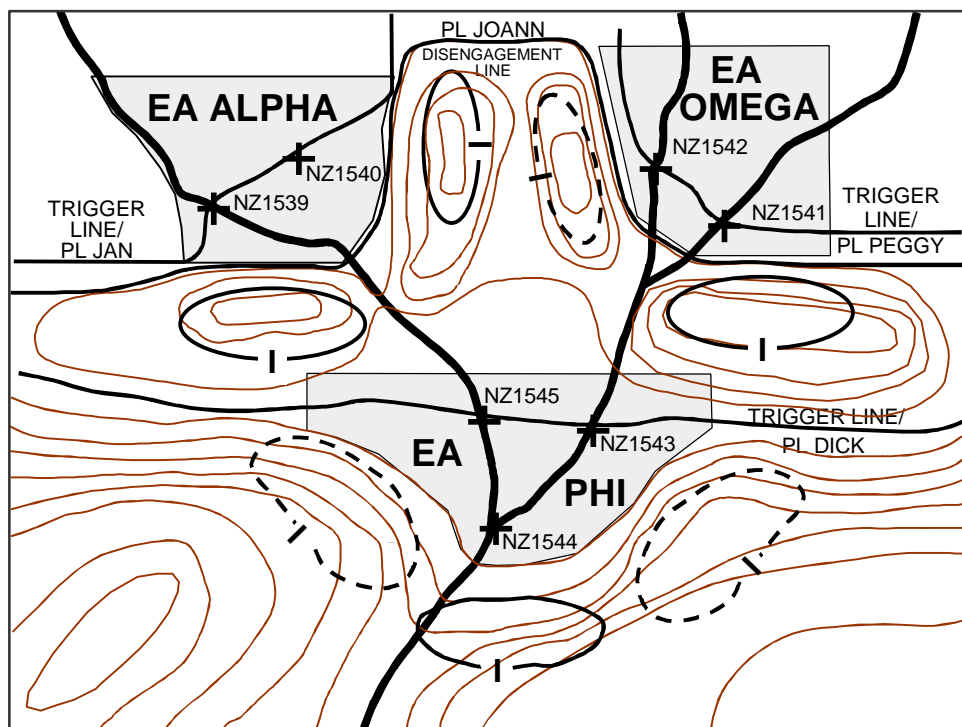


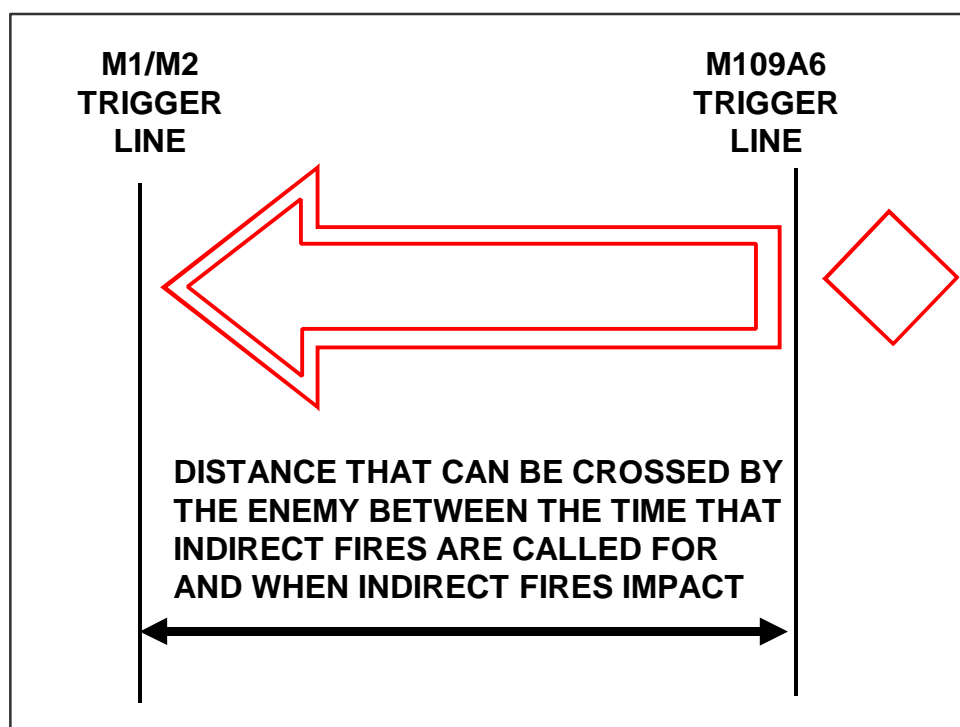
Figure 9-7. Direct Fire Control Measures

### Engagement Areas

9-26. An **engagement area** is an area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the massed fires of all available weapons. The commander determines the size and shape of the engagement area by the relatively unobstructed intervisibility from the weapon systems in their firing positions and the maximum range of those weapons. The commander designates EAs to cover each enemy avenue of approach into his defensive position, not around his defensive systems. Once the commander selects his engagement areas, he arrays his forces in positions to concentrate overwhelming effects into these areas. He routinely subdivides his EA into smaller EAs for his subordinates using one or more TRPs or by prominent terrain features. The commander assigns sectors of fires to subordinates to prevent fratricide, but responsibility for an avenue of approach is never split. They normally do not affect friendly maneuver. This control measure is normally used at battalion task-force level and below.

## Trigger Lines

**9-27. A trigger line is a phase line located on identifiable terrain that crosses the engagement area.** Units use trigger lines to initiate and mass fires into an engagement area at a predetermined range for all or like weapon systems. The commander can designate one trigger line for all weapon systems or multiple trigger lines for each weapon or type of weapon system. The commander specifies that a certain number or certain types of vehicles must cross the trigger line before engagement when he uses it with engagement criteria.



**Figure 9-8. Trigger Lines**

**9-28.** The commander designates a phase line as the trigger line for his fire support systems. He bases the trigger line's location on the factors of METT-TC. For example, in open terrain against a mechanized enemy with fire support provided by M109A6 howitzers, this fire support trigger line is approximately four kilometers beyond the point where the commander wants to engage the enemy with indirect fires. This gives time for the fire support system to respond to the initial call for fire. (See Figure 9-8.)

**9-29.** The commander establishes another trigger line for his most accurate, long-range weapon system in the vicinity of the area where the fire support will impact. He establishes other trigger lines and TRPs for shorter-range systems. He may give guidance to

extremely proficient crews to engage the enemy at longer than normal ranges or give different engagement priorities than the rest of the force, such as engage vehicles with two or more antennas or engage engineer-breaching systems.

**9-30.** When the enemy reaches these closer trigger lines, the commander establishes a decision point to determine if he wants his longer-range systems to fire in depth or to concentrate all his fires on a given point. Many factors impact this decision at the time that it is made; most of these factors concern the enemy and how he is maneuvering and the effects of the defending force's fires.

#### Disengagement Lines

**9-31. A disengagement line is a phase line located on identifiable terrain that, when crossed by the enemy, signal to defending elements that it is time to displace to their next positions.** The commander uses these lines in the delay and the defense when he does not intend for the defending unit to become decisively engaged. He establishes criteria for the disengagement, such as number of enemy vehicles by type, friendly losses, or enemy movement to flanking locations. Multiple disengagement lines, one for each system in the defense, may exist.

### COMMON DEFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

**9-32.** In the defense, synchronization of the effects of his combat and supporting systems allows a commander to apply overwhelming combat power against selected advancing enemy forces to unhinge the enemy commander's plan and destroy his combined arms team. Defensive synchronization is normally the result of detailed planning and preparation among the various units participating in an operation. While the units' activities may be separated in time and space, they are synchronized if their combined consequences are felt at decisive times and places. All defensive operations are a mix of static and dynamic actions. As an operation evolves, the commander knows that he will probably be required to shift his decisive and shaping operations to press the fight and keep the enemy off balance. Synchronized prior planning and preparation increases the commander's combat power and thus increases the effectiveness of the defense.

**9-33.** The ideal defense can be characterized as a shield of blows. At the onset of the attack, the defending commander yields the initiative to the enemy. However, he exploits prepared, mutually supporting positions organized for all-around defense and uses his knowledge of the terrain to slow the enemy's momentum. He draws the enemy into engagement areas where concentrated and integrated fires violently erupt from concealed and protected positions. He then counterattacks the enemy, repeatedly imposing

unexpected blows. The defending force maintains its security and disrupts the enemy's attack at every opportunity. The defending force defeats the attacking enemy's combined arms team, shatters his cohesion, degrades his strength and ability to concentrate, and destroys his exposed forces with effective maneuver. However, to be successful, the defending force does not generally have to kill every enemy soldier, squad, or combat system. It only has to destroy the enemy's ability to synchronize his combined arms team or his will to fight.

**9-34.** A defense will be more effective when there is adequate time to thoroughly plan and prepare defensive positions. Lack of preparation time may cause the commander to maintain a larger-than-normal reserve force or accept greater risks than usual. He may have to adopt a mobile defense rather than an area defense. All units must be capable of mounting a defense with minimal preparation, but a strong defense takes time to organize and prepare. If the enemy attack does not take place at the predicted time, the commander should use the additional time to improve his unit's defensive positions. He can increase the effectiveness of the security area, establish additional alternate and supplementary positions, refine the defensive plan to include branches and sequels, conduct defensive rehearsals, and maintain vehicles and personnel. To gain time to organize a defense, the commander may order his security force to conduct a delay while the main body disengages and moves to a more advantageous defensive position. The security force must know how long it needs to delay the enemy for the main body to prepare its defense.

#### **DEPLOY/CONDUCT MANEUVER**

**9-35.** The commander's intent is to defeat the enemy attack before he conducts his final assault on friendly defensive positions overwhelming the enemy with repeated, unexpected blows. As the enemy attack fails, the enemy must attempt to withdraw or transition to a defense in the face of friendly counterattacks. If the enemy succeeds in overrunning key defensive position, the defending force counterattacks to overwhelm the enemy before he can either organize that position for defense or exploit his success.

#### **Exploit the Advantages of Terrain**

**9-36.** The defending commander exploits the defending force's advantages of occupying the terrain where the fight will occur. The defending force engages the attacker from locations that give the defending force an advantage over the attacking enemy. These locations include defiles, rivers, thick woods, swamps, cliffs, canals, built-up areas, and reverse slopes. Defensive positions in the MBA should make use of existing

and reinforcing obstacles. The commander may choose to shape the battlefield by defending one area to deny terrain to the enemy, while delaying in another area to create the illusion of success in the opposing commander's mind.

**9-37.** The defending commander plans how to use key terrain to impede the enemy's movement. At the same time he wants to expose portions of the enemy force for destruction without giving up the advantages of fighting from protected positions. Examples of key terrain include terrain that permits the defending force to cover a major obstacle system by fire; important road junctions and choke points that impact troop movements, such as the movement of reserves; or lines of communications.

**9-38.** The commander determines the probable force ratios he will face and arrays his forces accordingly. The terrain impacts how fast the enemy can close on his positions and thus how much time is available to employ combat multipliers, such as indirect fires. Once the commander arrives at acceptable force ratios — or the degree of risk he must take is clear — he allocates his available forces and begins planning his engagement areas.

**9-39.** On each enemy avenue of approach, the commander determines where he wants to destroy the enemy. He arrays those forces allocated to that avenue of approach around this point to establish an engagement area. He uses obstacles and fires to canalize enemy forces into this engagement area. The commander takes those actions necessary to increase the kill probabilities of his various weapon systems at different ranges.

**9-40.** Generally, defending forces have the advantage of preparing the terrain where they will fight the enemy by reinforcing natural obstacles, fortifying positions, and rehearsing operations. First, they prepare the ground in a manner that forces the piecemeal commitment of enemy forces and their subsequent defeat in detail. Second, they prepare the ground to force him to fight where he does not want to fight, such as in open areas dominated by terrain that offers adequate cover and concealment for the occupying friendly forces. The defending force tries to guide or entice the enemy into prepared engagement areas. Units employ and continuously strengthen obstacles and fortifications to improve the natural defensive strength of the position, which has a direct bearing on the distribution of forces, frontages, and depth of the defense.

**9-41.** Terrain features that favor defensive operations include:

- A series of parallel ridges across the line of hostile advance.

- Unfordable streams, swamps, lakes, and other obstacles on the front and flanks.
- High ground with good observation and long-range fields of fire.
- Concealed movement routes immediately behind defensive positions.
- Limited road network in front of the line of contact to confine the enemy to predictable avenues of approach.
- Good road network behind the line of contact that allows the commander to reposition his forces as the battle progresses.

The opposite of the terrain conditions listed above degrades a force's ability to conduct defensive operations. For example, terrain with a limited road net that canalizes the defending force allows the enemy to predict its movement and take steps to interdict that movement.

### **Maintain Security**

**9-42.** Security operations seek to confuse the enemy about the location of the commander's main battle positions, prevent enemy observation of preparations and positions, and keep the enemy from delivering observed fire on the positions. They also try to force the attacking enemy to deploy prematurely. They can offset the attacker's inherent advantage of initiative regarding the time, place, plan, direction, strength, and composition of his attack by forcing him to attack blind into prepared defenses. The commander must not permit enemy reconnaissance and surveillance assets to determine the precise location and strength of defensive positions, obstacles, engagement areas, and reserves. First, the defending force conducts reconnaissance to gain and maintain contact with the enemy. Second, each echelon normally establishes a security area forward of its main battle area (MBA). All units conduct aggressive security operations within their area of operations, including the sustainment area, to seek out and repel or kill enemy reconnaissance and other forces. Units implement operations security (OPSEC) measures and other defensive information operations to deny the enemy information about friendly dispositions. See Chapter 13 for more information on security operations.

### **Disrupt the Enemy Attack at Every Opportunity**

**9-43.** The defending force conducts operations throughout the depth of the enemy's formation in time and space to destroy his key units and assets or disrupt their timely introduction at the point of engagement, particularly his artillery and reserves, into battle. This allows the defending force to regain the initiative. It conducts spoiling attacks to disrupt the enemy's troop concentrations and attack preparations. The defending force counterattacks enemy successes rapidly with its reserve, the forces at hand, or a

striking force before the enemy can exploit success. It conducts offensive information operations to assist this process.

#### **Mass the Effects of Combat Power**

**9-44.** The defending force must mass the effects of its combat power to overwhelm the enemy and regain the initiative. That is why the commander designates one or more decisive operations. He uses economy of force measures in areas that do not involve these decisive operations to mass the effects of his forces in the area where a decision is sought. This point can be a geographical objective or an enemy force. In an area defense, defending units use EAs to concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power from mutually supporting positions. In a mobile defense, the commander uses the striking force to generate overwhelming combat power against a portion of the attacking enemy to allow the enemy's defeat in detail. Another way he can generate the effects of mass is through committing his reserve.

#### **Ensure Mutual Support**

**9-45.** Mutual support exists when positions and units support each other by direct, indirect, lethal, and nonlethal fire, thus preventing the enemy from attacking one position without being subjected to fire from one or more adjacent positions. Mutual support increases the strength of all defensive positions, prevents defeat in detail, and helps prevent infiltration between positions. Tactical positions achieve the maximum degree of mutual support between them when they are located to observe or monitor the ground between them or conduct patrols to prevent any enemy infiltration. At night or during periods of limited visibility, the commander may position small tactical units closer together to retain the advantages of mutual support. The unit leaders must coordinate the nature and extent of their mutual support.

#### **Heavy Forces**

**9-46.** When the majority of a defending force consists of mechanized or armored units, the commander can conduct a defense designed to take advantage of the tactical mobility and protection offered by their organic armored vehicles. Heavy forces can maneuver to delay the advance of a strong enemy force and then immediately change over from a mobile to a static form of action or counterattack. Such forces are well suited for use as security and MBA forces. Heavy forces are more suited for operations within an NBC contaminated environment than light forces because of their built-in protection.



## Light Forces

**9-47.** When facing enemy light forces, the commander deploys and uses defending light forces in the same manner as heavy forces are used against other heavy forces. Light forces facing a heavy enemy are normally employed primarily in static roles within the MBA or in security roles within the sustainment area. When facing heavy enemy forces, light infantry are most effective when fighting from prepared defenses or in close terrain, such as swamps, woods, hilly and mountainous area, and urban areas where they can take advantage of their foot mobility and comparatively short-range infantry and anti-armor weapons.

**9-48.** The commander uses an air assault unit in the same manner as other light forces once they deploy into their landing zones. (See Appendix C for a discussion of air assault operations.) However, there may be more problems in extracting such a force, particularly if it is in direct contact with the enemy. Because of its mobility and potential reaction speed, an air assault force is often well-suited for a reserve role during defensive operations. Its tasks might include:

- Rapid reinforcement of a threatened position.
- Occupation of a blocking position, possibly in conjunction with existing defensive positions.
- Sustainment area security operations, such as containment of an enemy airborne or helicopter assault.
- Reinforcement of encircled friendly forces.
- Flank protection.

## Army Aviation

**9-49.** Army aviation units are particularly valuable in the defense because of their speed, mobility, and versatility. Their tasks can include:

- Conducting reconnaissance and security operations.
- Causing the early defeat of an attacking enemy through the conduct of decisive operations.
- Conducting shaping operations to establish the necessary conditions to decide operations by other forces through attriting, disrupting, and delaying the enemy.
- Conducting counterattacks and spoiling attacks.
- Controlling ground where a commander does not wish to irrevocably commit ground forces; for example, forward of an executed obstacle.
- Closing gaps in a defense plan before the arrival of ground maneuver forces.
- Facilitating the disengagement of ground forces.
- Countering enemy activities in the sustainment area, in particular enemy airborne or air assault forces.
- Using available utility and cargo helicopters in their normal roles to support the defensive effort, such as resupplying the defending force with CLASS IV barrier material.

- Assisting in the countermobility effort.
- Providing long-range biological surveillance.

## Mobility

**9-50.** During the defense, mobility tasks include maintenance of routes, coordination of gaps in existing obstacles, and support for counterattacks. Engineers also open helicopter landing zones and tactical landing strips for fixed-wing aircraft. The maintenance and improvement of routes and the creation of bypass or alternate routes at critical points are major engineering tasks because movement routes are subjected to fires from enemy artillery and air support systems. These enemy fires may necessitate the deployment of engineer equipment, such as assault bridging and bulldozers, forward. To enhance mobility, the commander can also evacuate refugees or restrict their movements to routes not required by his forces, provided he coordinates the action with the host nation or the appropriate civil-military operations agency and fulfills his responsibilities to displaced civilians under international law.

**9-51.** Priority of support in the mobility effort must be to routes used by counterattacking forces, then to routes used by main body forces displacing to subsequent positions. This mainly involves breaching obstacles and improving combat roads and trails to allow tactical support vehicles to accompany the movement of combat vehicles. Careful coordination ensures required lanes or gaps are left in obstacles for repositioning of main body units and the commitment of the counterattack force during the defense. The presence of chemical reconnaissance systems adds to the force's mobility in a contaminated environment.

## Countermobility

**9-52.** In the defense, the commander normally concentrates his engineer efforts on countering the enemy's mobility. A defending force typically requires large quantities of CLASS IV and V material and specialized equipment to construct obstacles, fighting, and survivability positions. With limited assets, the commander must establish priorities among countermobility, mobility, and survivability efforts. He must coordinate these efforts with the echelon's logistic plans.

**9-53.** The commander may plan to canalize the enemy force into a salient. In this case, he takes advantage of the enemy force's forward orientation by fixing the enemy's forward movement and then delivering a blow to the enemy's flank or rear. As the enemy's attacking force assumes a protective posture, the defending commander rapidly coordinates and concentrates all of his direct and indirect fires against unprepared and

unsupported segments of the enemy force in rapid sequence. These fires may be delivered simultaneously or sequentially.

**9-54.** When planning obstacles, commanders and staffs must consider not only current operations but also future operations. The commander should design obstacles for current operations so they do not hinder future operations. A commander at any level authorized to employ obstacles can designate certain obstacles that are important to his ability to shape the battlefield as high-priority reserve obstacles. He assigns responsibility for preparation to a subordinate unit but retains authority for ordering their execution or final completion. An example of a reserve obstacle is a highway bridge over a major river. Such obstacles receive the highest priority in preparation and, if ordered, execution by the designated subordinate unit. Field Manual 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, provides additional information about obstacles and obstacle integration, such as planning factors relating to the emplacement of obstacles and obstacle function versus lethality.

**9-55.** A commander integrates reinforcing obstacles with existing obstacles to improve the natural restrictive nature of the terrain to halt or slow enemy movement, canalizes enemy movement into engagement areas, and protects friendly positions and maneuver. Direct and indirect fires must cover obstacles if they are to be effective. When possible, units conceal obstacles from hostile observation. They coordinate obstacle plans with adjacent units and conform to the obstacle zone or belts of superior echelons.

**9-56.** Effective obstacles force the enemy to attempt to breach them if he wants to maintain the momentum of his attack and retain the initiative. While the defending force is aware that the enemy is going to breach an obstacle, he tries not to reveal exactly where and when he will try to breach. The defending force's plan must address how to counter the enemy's breach, to include reestablishing the obstacle by using scatterable mines and other techniques.

**9-57.** Given time and resources, the defending force generally constructs additional obstacle systems to its flanks and rear. These systems can provide the force with additional protection from enemy attacks by forcing the enemy to spend time and resources to breach the obstacle or to conduct a bypass operation. This, in turn, gives the defending force more time to engage enemy forces that are executing breaching operations or to maneuver against the enemy.

**9-58.** The commander designates the unit responsible for establishing and securing each obstacle. He may retain the authority on ordering the execution of some obstacles

or restrict the use of some types of obstacles to allow other battlefield activities to occur. He allows his subordinate commanders some flexibility in selecting the exact positioning of obstacles. However, all units must know which gaps through obstacles and crossing sites will be kept open for the unit's use, as well as the firing and self-destruct times of scatterable mines to prevent delays in movement. The commander must be specific and clear in his orders for firing demolitions, emplacing obstacles, and closing lanes. As each lane closes, the closing unit reports the lane's closure to the higher, subordinate, and adjacent headquarters to preclude displacing units from moving into areas with unmarked or abandoned friendly minefields and other obstacles.

**9-59.** Tactical and protective obstacles are constructed primarily at company level and below. Small unit commanders ensure that observation and fires cover all obstacles to hinder breaching. Deliberate protective obstacles are common around fixed sites. Protective obstacles are a key component of survivability operations. They are tied in with final protective fires and provide the friendly force with close-in protection. FM 90-7 describes the methods and essential principles for planning protective obstacles. Commanders at all echelons track defensive preparations, such as establishing CLASS IV and V supply points and start or completion times of obstacle belts and groups.

## **DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE**

**9-60.** During the planning process, the commander uses intelligence products to identify probable enemy objectives and various approaches. He studies patterns of enemy operations and the enemy's vulnerability to counterattack, interdiction, electronic warfare, air attacks, and canalization by obstacles. The commander must also examine the enemy's capability to conduct air attacks against his force, insert forces behind friendly units, and employ nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. He must determine how soon follow-on forces can join the attack against an enemy attacking in echelons.

**9-61.** The commander uses his reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and engineer assets to study the terrain. By studying the terrain, the commander tries to determine the principal heavy and light enemy and friendly avenues of approach, the most advantageous area for the enemy's main attack, as well as other factors of observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacle, key terrain, avenues of approach (OCOKA).

**9-62.** The commander must prepare a collection plan that provides early identification of the following:

- Locations, composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the advancing enemy force.
- Locations of possible enemy assembly areas.
- Location of enemy indirect fire weapon systems and units.
- Location of gaps, assailable flanks, and other enemy weaknesses.
- Location of areas for enemy helicopter and parachute assaults.
- Location of artillery and air defense gun and missile units.
- Location of enemy electronic warfare units.
- Effects of weather and terrain on current and projected operations.
- Likely withdrawal routes for enemy forces.
- Anticipated timetable for the enemy's most likely course of action.
- Locations of enemy command posts, fire direction control centers, electronic warfare sites, and target acquisition sensor and target fusion sites.

It is unlikely that the commander has complete knowledge of the enemy's intentions; therefore, he must plan to continue his intelligence efforts during the battle. FM 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance*, discusses reconnaissance assets available at each echelon.

## EMPLOY FIREPOWER

**9-63.** In the defense, the commander uses his fire support systems to neutralize, suppress, or destroy enemy forces; to delay or disrupt the enemy's ability to execute a given course of action; and to enhance the effects of massed direct fires. Thus fire support systems support both the commander's decisive and shaping operations.

**9-64.** The defending force is more effective if it can locate and attack enemy forces while the enemy is stationary and concentrated in assembly areas or advancing along lines of communication (LOC), as opposed to when he is deployed in combat formations within the MBA. To accomplish this, the defending force must employ its fire support system throughout its area of operation. It must be closely linked to target acquisition means, including reconnaissance and surveillance assets.

**9-65.** As the commander develops his defensive plans, he must visualize how to synchronize, coordinate, and distribute the effects of indirect and direct fire at the decisive time and place. He places permissive FSCM as close as possible to friendly position to facilitate the rapid engagement of attacking enemy forces. Prior coordination facilitates the concentration of fires before enemy targets concentrated at obstacles and other choke points can disperse. Proper distribution of fires ensures the massing of overwhelming combat power at the desired point. Proper fire distribution also ensures that high-payoff targets are destroyed without wasting assets with their repetitive engagement by multiple friendly systems.

**9-66.** Indirect fires have the greatest impact on the enemy when they are synchronized with direct fires and the use of obstacles, defensive positions, and counterattack plans. The commander must integrate the defensive fire and obstacle plan from the very beginning. Indirect fires complement the effects of obstacles and can disrupt enemy attempts to breach or bypass these obstacles. For the plans to work, all elements in the fire support chain, from forward observers in fire support teams to the fire support coordinator (FSCOORD), must understand the commander's intent, the scheme of maneuver, and the obstacle plan.

**9-67.** There are a variety of fire support considerations for each phase of the fight. As part of his shaping operations, while preparing the defense, a commander tries to disrupt the enemy's attack preparations by —

- Attriting his resources by continuously engaging high-payoff and high-value targets.
- Conducting harassing fires on choke points and likely enemy assembly areas.
- Employing air support on known, suspected, and likely enemy locations.
- Conducting lethal and nonlethal offensive information operations to degrade the enemy's ability to command and control his forces.
- Employing counterfires to engage and destroy enemy artillery and mortar systems attempting to deliver suppressive fires.

In some situations it may be better to wait to execute a counterfire mission until the fight in the MBA. However, when defending forces are technically superior, the effects of counterfire on the enemy are usually worth the risk of subjecting friendly systems to enemy retaliation. The defender's ability to mass fires quickly and then rapidly reposition its forces is a major factor in disrupting the enemy and establishing the required conditions for successful decisive operations.

**9-68.** The commander uses his fire support system to support his security forces, using precision and other munitions to destroy enemy reconnaissance and high-payoff targets; this helps to deceive the enemy as to the location of the MBA. He also supports the security force by planning the delivery of the effects of fires at appropriate times and places throughout his area of influence to slow and canalize the enemy as he approaches the security area. This allows the security force to engage the enemy on more favorable terms. Finally the fire support system supports the withdrawal of the security force once its shaping mission is complete and the defending unit is prepared to conduct MBA operations.

**9-69.** Air support can play an important part in delaying enemy forces that are following or attempting to bypass rearward-moving defending forces. Air operations

contribute to overcoming the enemy's initial advantage of freedom of action. Often only aircraft are available to initially oppose an enemy penetration until ground forces can redeploy to engage him. Close air support (CAS) can be instrumental in disrupting an enemy advance. It can operate with Army helicopters to form a joint air attack team (JAAT). The commander times the availability of CAS to replace cannon artillery fires while artillery systems reposition. He also uses artillery fires to suppress enemy air defenses while CAS hits a target. Air interdiction can delay, destroy, or neutralize enemy follow-on forces, thereby providing the commander with additional time to prepare his defensive positions.

**9-70.** Once the fight moves into the MBA, fire support assets continue to target enemy combat units to force them to deploy while inflicting casualties and disrupting the cohesion of the enemy's attack and his ability to mass combat power. Fires support assets continue to attack enemy follow-on forces before they can be committed to the MBA to isolate the attacking enemy force. They attack C<sup>2</sup> facilities and logistics sites in depth to contribute to isolating the attacking enemy. The commander takes advantage of the range and flexibility of his fire support weapons to mass fires at critical points, such as obstacles and EAs to slow and canalize the enemy to provide better targets for direct fire systems. Fire support systems cover barriers, gaps, and open areas within the MBA. Tasks assigned to these fire support systems include closing obstacle gaps or reseeding previously breached obstacles. Other tasks include:

- Mass fires to suppress enemy direct and indirect fire systems to facilitate defensive maneuver, especially the counterattack and disengagement.
- Attack enemy artillery and forward air defense elements.
- Neutralize or isolate enemy forces that have penetrated the defensive area and impeding the movement of enemy reserves.
- Use scatterable mines to impede enemy movement.
- Reallocate fire support assets after identifying the enemy's decisive operation(s) to reinforce fires in the most vulnerable area(s).
- Separate attacking enemy combat vehicles from light infantry, disrupting the enemy's combined arms team.

**9-71.** In response to shallow enemy penetrations, artillery commanders normally reposition their weapon systems laterally, away from that point. This allows artillery systems to provide fire support throughout the area of penetration.

## **PERFORM LOGISTICS AND CSS**

**9-72.** The commander addresses several CSS considerations unique to the defense in his plan. Priorities for replenishment are normally ammunition and materials to construct obstacles and defensive positions. There is normally a reduced need for bulk fuel.

There may be an increased demand for decontaminates and chemical protective equipment. The defense should consider stockpiling or cacheing ammunition and limited amounts of petroleum products in centrally located positions within the main battle area. The commander should plan to destroy those stocks if necessary as part of denial operations. The supply of obstacle material in a defense can be a significant problem that requires detailed coordination and long lead times. The commander should not overlook the transportation and manpower required to procure and move obstacle material, construct positions, and uncrate mines.

**9-73.** The logistics officer (G4 or S4) and the commanders of the logistics units supporting the defending force must understand the commander's tactical intent. They can then establish service support priorities in accordance with the commander's intent and plan logistics operations to ensure the supportability of the operations. Logistics plans should address the provision of CSS during branches and sequels to the defense plan, such as a counterattack into the flank of an adjacent unit.

**9-74.** At the battalion and brigade level, the commander ensures that his CSS operators send push packages of critically needed supplies on a scheduled basis from support locations to his combat elements. This includes using utility and cargo helicopters to push supplies direct from the sustainment area to the defending unit. Combat units should be topped off regularly in the event an enemy breakthrough disrupts the replenishment flow. The commander should stress the need to "push" combat configured logistics packages on a scheduled basis. CSS operators send regular shipments of potable and non-potable water, NBC defense supplies, barrier materials, ammunition, POL, medical supplies, and repair parts forward to eliminate the need to request supplies and reduce the chance that a lapse in communications will interrupt the supply flow and jeopardize the integrity of the defense. The receiving unit should be resupplied using push packages until it issues instructions to the contrary. Advances in information systems should allow these push packages to be accurately tailored to the demands of the supported combat units.

**9-75.** As a technique, the defending force conducts resupply during periods of limited visibility to reduce the chances of enemy interference. The commander may be required to infiltrate resupply vehicles to reduce detection chances when the enemy possesses a significant air, satellite, or unmanned aerial vehicle capability. Both of these techniques increase the amount of time required to conduct resupply operations. The commander may also use smoke to help conceal his logistic operations.



**9-76.** The CSS commander remains responsible for the defense of his unit. Concealment is an important factor in reducing the risk factors of these units. The commander must plan for the reconstitution of CSS capability lost to enemy activities.

**9-77.** Real estate management is a critical consideration in the sustainment area. The commander tries to locate each CSS unit where it can fulfill its support tasks while using minimal resources to maintain security in conjunction with other units located in the sustainment area. In contiguous operations, the commander should position his CSS facilities further to the rear in a defense than in the offense to avoid interfering with the movement of units between battle positions or the forward movement of counterattack forces. In noncontiguous operations, the commander should position his CSS facilities within the perimeters of his combat units to provide security and avoid the interruption of support services. In both environments the commander distributes the placement of his similar function CSS units throughout his defensive area. This distribution allows the commander to designate one support unit to pick up the workload of a displacing second support unit until that unit is operational.

**9-78.** The defending commander provides maintenance support as far forward as possible to reduce the need to evacuate equipment. The thrust of the maintenance effort is to fix as far forward as possible those systems that can be quickly returned to the unit in combat-ready condition. He must ensure that forward logistics elements (FLE) contain the maximum variety of DS personnel with appropriate equipment, such as repair sets, kits, and outfits to ensure this rapid repair of weapon systems.

**9-79.** The commander must plan to augment his available ambulances if a mass-casualty situation develops. Units should always plan for mass casualties and have an evacuation plan, including air evacuation.

**9-80.** Supporting troop movements and resupply convoys are critical to the success of the defense. To do this, staffs must balance terrain management, movement planning, and traffic-circulation control. They must plan multiple routes throughout the area of operations and closely control their use. The commander may allocate mobility resources to maintain main supply routes in a functional condition to support units and supplies moving forward and to evacuate personnel and equipment to the rear. Military police ease these movements, prevent congestion, and respond to maneuver plan changes. Civil affairs and host nation agencies are involved as necessary to minimize the impact of displaced civilians on unit and convoy movements. The commander coordinates air and ground movements supporting the commander's maneuver scheme with

any other affected services. Commanders also coordinate such movements with any affected Army aviation, fire support, air defense units, and ground maneuver units internal and external to their organizations.

**9-81.** During the preparatory phase of the defense, logistics operators normally prepare supply stocks, particularly ammunition and barrier materials, in the battle positions of stationary forces. They also establish maintenance and medical collection points. Logistics operators must address these and other logistics preparations in the planning process to avoid compromising the operation. These logistics preparations can also be included in military deception plans.

#### **EXERCISE COMMAND AND CONTROL**

**9-82.** Assignment of a mission of defense within an AO imposes few restrictions on the defending commander. It allows him complete freedom to maneuver within his boundaries, but requires him to prevent enemy penetration of the rear boundary. Defense of an AO is a typical mission for battalion and higher-echelon units. This mission allows the commander to distribute forces to suit the terrain and plan an engagement that integrates direct and indirect fires. When assigning AOs, the commander must ensure that subordinate unit defensive plans are compatible and that control measures, such as contact points and phase lines, are sufficient for flank coordination. The defensive plan must address what happens when it succeeds and the opportunity exists to transition from defense to offense.

**9-83.** Defensive operations are often difficult to conduct because they may occur against an enemy who has the initiative and usually the superior combat power. The commander must have a clear understanding of the battlefield situation to mass the effects of his forces to disengage committed forces. The commander takes advantage of wargaming that takes place in the military decision making process (MDMP) to derive his decision points. He bases these decision points on enemy and friendly actions, such as shifting fires, moving between battle positions, and rearming part or all of the defending force. He may require additional signal support to sustain communications across wide frontages characteristic of many defensive operations.

**9-84.** Because the enemy has the initiative, the commander may have to frequently shift his shaping efforts to contain the enemy's attack until he can seize the initiative from the enemy. This may require him to adjust AOs, repeatedly commit and reconstitute his reserve, and modify the original plan.

**9-85.** To break through the MBA, the enemy often attacks along the boundaries of defending units when they can be identified. Therefore, it is extremely important for commanders at every echelon to ensure that the plan for their part of the defense is properly coordinated not only within their units but also with flanking and supporting units. This coordination is best done by personal visits to subordinate commanders on the ground. The staff should promptly pass on decisions reached during coordination to all concerned. The following planning aspects require special attention in the coordination process:

- A complete understanding of the superior commander's intent and concept of operations.
- A common understanding of the tactics to be applied by flanking and support units.
- Selection of boundary locations so that these do not increase the coordination problem.
- Planning for mutual support.
- Surveillance and target acquisition plans.
- Location and composition of security forces.
- Obstacles and demolition plans.
- Fire plans, to include the employment of antiarmor systems, illumination, and smoke.
- Air defense coverage areas.
- The employment of the reserve in conjunction with information operations and fire support systems, such as artillery and aviation.
- Boundaries and other control measures.
- Communications.

**9-86.** Because  $C^2$  facilities tend to be more stationary in the defense, the commander should place them in hardened areas or protective terrain and reduce their electronic signature. They must remain capable of rapidly relocating to respond to battlefield developments.

## **PROTECT THE FORCE**

**9-87.** Since the attacking force usually has the initiative in terms of where and when it will attack, a defending commander must take a wide range of actions to protect his force from losses because of enemy actions and the environment. These steps include ensuring all-around defense; air defense; nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense, using smoke, and taking other survivability measures.

### **Ensure All-Around Defense**

**9-88.** The battlefield offers many opportunities for small enemy elements to move undetected. For this reason, units maintain all-around security at all times. Units employ

all-around security around their positions while deploying the bulk of their combat power against likely enemy avenues of approach.

## **Air Defense**

**9-89.** Freedom of movement is essential to successful defensive operations. In a hostile air environment, the defending force must establish air defense in depth around critical points, areas, units, and activities. The dedicated air defense artillery resources are unlikely to be sufficient to provide adequate cover completely throughout the AO; therefore, the commander must establish priorities for coverage and assume risk.

**9-90.** Normally, the commander's priorities for air defense protection in the defense begin with his C<sup>2</sup> facilities because they are generally fixed or semi-fixed sites with high-electronic signatures, which makes them susceptible to attack by enemy aircraft. Air defense coordinators examine air avenues of approach toward C<sup>2</sup> facilities and position guns and missiles to prevent enemy aircraft from reaching their targets.

**9-91.** Logistics support areas, main supply routes, and other logistics sites are also relatively fixed and easily identified from the air. Passive air defense measures help prevent detection. However, once the enemy detects them, he will attempt to attack them. As a result, route and point security missions require air defense units to locate along the main supply route and in positions to protect fixed locations. The commander allocates his air defense assets to protect these locations in accordance with the factors of METT-TC.

**9-92.** The air defense responsibility may be most critical in forward areas since the commander will task ADA units along the FEBA to engage enemy aircraft providing CAS or attempting low-level penetration of friendly air defenses enroute to a target in the friendly sustainment area. Air defense assets protecting combat forces in forward battle positions and strongpoints are more exposed to destruction by enemy direct and indirect fire systems than air defense systems located elsewhere on the battlefield. The commander must take steps to ensure their survivability, such as placing man-portable air defense missile gunners inside combat vehicles when not actively engaging enemy aircraft.

**9-93.** The reserve or striking force is initially a stationary hidden force. It is especially vulnerable once it is discovered. It is easy to observe from the air as it moves upon its commitment by the commander. The commander positions air defense assets to protect the reserve or strike force whether it is stationary or moving.

**9-94.** Air defense systems that protect the reserve and the striking force must be as mobile and protected as the forces they are protecting. The less mobile equipment is usually kept in more static roles. The commander must continually coordinate his air defense activities with his air and artillery operations to avoid fratricide. Air defense units and support assets must move in support of the defensive effort. If the enemy can disrupt this support from the air, it will affect the conduct of the defense. Correct assessment of enemy air corridors and tactics is essential to guarantee protection and management of these resources.

**9-95.** The destruction of key bridges or the closing of choke points interrupts the defender's freedom of movement. The force must protect these positions to sustain the defense and allow the conduct of counterattacks. The commander locates air defense assets to protect these vital locations.

#### **NBC Defense**

**9-96.** Because defending units are often in fixed positions, they increase their vulnerability to weapons of mass destruction. The commander must specify the degree of risk he is willing to accept and establish priorities for his NBC defense units. He positions forces and installations to avoid congestion, but he must not disperse to the extent that he risks defeat in detail by an enemy employing more conventional munitions.

**9-97.** The commander should employ NBC reconnaissance units along movement routes and at potential choke points. Proper use of these assets enables the commander to reduce casualties and complete his mission. NBC defense operations are detailed in FM 3-100, *Chemical Operations, Principles and Fundamentals*, and FM 100-30, *Nuclear Operations*.

#### **Smoke and Obscuration**

**9-98.** The commander uses smoke to disrupt his assault or movement formations and deny his the use of target acquisition optics, visual navigation aids, air avenues of approach, landing zones (LZs), and drop zones (DZs). Smoke creates gaps in enemy formations, separating or isolating attacking units, and disrupting their planned movement. Bispectral obscuration can blind attackers who lack thermal viewers or other enhanced optical systems. It prevents overwatching enemy elements from observing and engaging the defender while defending forces with advanced optical systems can acquire and engage the enemy within the smoke. The commander can use smoke to facilitate friendly target acquisition by highlighting enemy systems against a light background while degrading the enemy's optics. Smoke used to mask obstacle located in low level

flight corridors and on LZs and DZs can prevent an enemy from using them or greatly increase his risk.

**9-99.** The commander uses his smoke-generation capabilities to mark targets and screen and obscure friendly positions. Modern bispectral obscurants provide protection from thermal as well as visual viewing devices. This generated capability must be carefully sited with regard to enemy systems and friendly capabilities. Improper use can create an advantage for the enemy. The effectiveness of smoke depends upon weather conditions and the quantity of smoke employed. The commander coordinates the use of smoke generators, artillery/mortar smoke, and smoke pot employment. The capabilities of each of these smoke-producing systems are complementary and most effective when the commander uses them together to achieve synergistic effects. The use of smoke can also enhance the effects of deception operations and cover friendly movement. Field Manual 3-50, *Smoke Operations*, provides details on planning, preparing, and executing smoke operations.

## Survivability

**9-100.** The survivability effort for the defense must enable units to concentrate fire power from fixed positions. To avoid detection and destruction by the enemy, units move frequently and establish survivability positions quickly. To provide flexibility, units may need primary, alternate, and supplementary positions. This is particularly true of units defending key or decisive terrain. Units enhance their survivability through the use of concealment, deception, dispersion, and field fortifications.

**9-101.** Survivability tasks include the use of engineer equipment to assist in preparing and constructing trenches, command post shelters, artillery firing positions, and combat vehicle fighting positions. The commander provides guidance on the level of protection (hull, defilade, overhead cover, etc.), the priority of systems, and on the early use of specialized engineer systems that can construct survivability positions. He should protect supply stocks against blast, shrapnel, incendiaries, and NBC contamination. Supplies loaded on tactical vehicles can be protected against almost anything but a direct hit by constructing berms large enough to accommodate the vehicles and deep enough to keep the supplies below ground level. The force's engineer officer can provide advice to CSS logistics operators concerning storage area site selection that reduces the requirements for engineer survivability support without reducing the degree of protection provided.

**9-102.** The commander should avoid predictable defensive preparations because an enemy will tend to attack lightly defended areas. Major positions, facilities, and

operational logistics sites may require special camouflage. Camouflage measures that provide this protection include constructing dummy positions and decoys. The commander carefully plans the use of such measures within the framework of real positions and ongoing and future operations. The echelon's OPSEC program, and any deception efforts conducted in accordance with guidance from higher echelons, should conceal from the enemy or mislead him regarding the location of the MBA and the disposition of friendly forces.

## COMMON DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

**9-103.** Certain common defensive situations have their own unique planning considerations. The following section addresses these situations and the unique considerations associated with each.

- Defense Against Airborne and Air Assault Attacks
- Defense of a Linear Obstacle
- Perimeter Defense
- Reverse Slope Defense

## DEFENSE AGAINST AIRBORNE AND AIR ASSAULT ATTACKS

**9-104.** Defeat of an enemy airborne or air assault begins with good air defense coverage to destroy or scatter enemy aircraft before they launch or during their movement to the drop zone (DZ) or the landing zone (LZ). A commander uses the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process to identify likely DZs and LZs. After prioritizing the risk of each potential DZ or LZ to his operation, the commander establishes systematic surveillance of these areas to alert him if the enemy attempts to insert his forces. Units also sight their weapons to cover the most probable DZs and LZs. The fire support plan includes these zones in its target list for conventional munitions and scatterable mines. Units and engineers emplace obstacles in these locations and block avenues of approach from such areas to critical friendly installations and activities as part of their countermobility and sustainment area survivability efforts.

**9-105.** Once enemy forces succeed in landing, the key to a successful defense is speed in containing and counterattacking the inserted enemy force before it becomes organized and reinforced. Field artillery and attack helicopters must commit rapidly to take advantage of the concentration of targets in the insertion area. Affected base and base cluster defense forces and available response forces keep the enemy force under observation at all times, calling in and designating targets for available fire support systems. The commander rapidly musters and commits available heavy units and combat systems to take advantage of enemy light forces' vulnerabilities to attack by armored vehicles while they remain concentrated in the insertion area. If more enemy troops land and

succeed in consolidating, local base and base cluster defense forces and the response force try to fix the enemy force in a chosen location to allow a tactical combat force (TCF) to counterattack. If the enemy force is too large for the TCF to reduce, the commander may need to commit his reserve to defeat it.

#### **DEFENSE OF A LINEAR OBSTACLE**

**9-106.** A commander may conduct either an area or mobile defense along or behind a linear obstacle. An area defense is normally preferred because it accepts less risk by not allowing the enemy to cross the linear obstacle. Linear obstacles such as mountain ranges or river lines generally favor a forward defense. The defending force attempts to defeat any enemy attempt to secure a bridgehead across the linear obstacle. Local defending units immediately and violently counterattack any enemy bridgeheads established to destroy enemy forces located within the bridgehead, while higher echelons attempt to isolate enemy bridgehead sites. If the enemy secures a bridgehead and strikes out rapidly, it could quickly penetrate the defending force. It is extremely difficult to deploy in strength along the entire length of a linear obstacle. The defending commander must conduct economy of force measures in some areas.

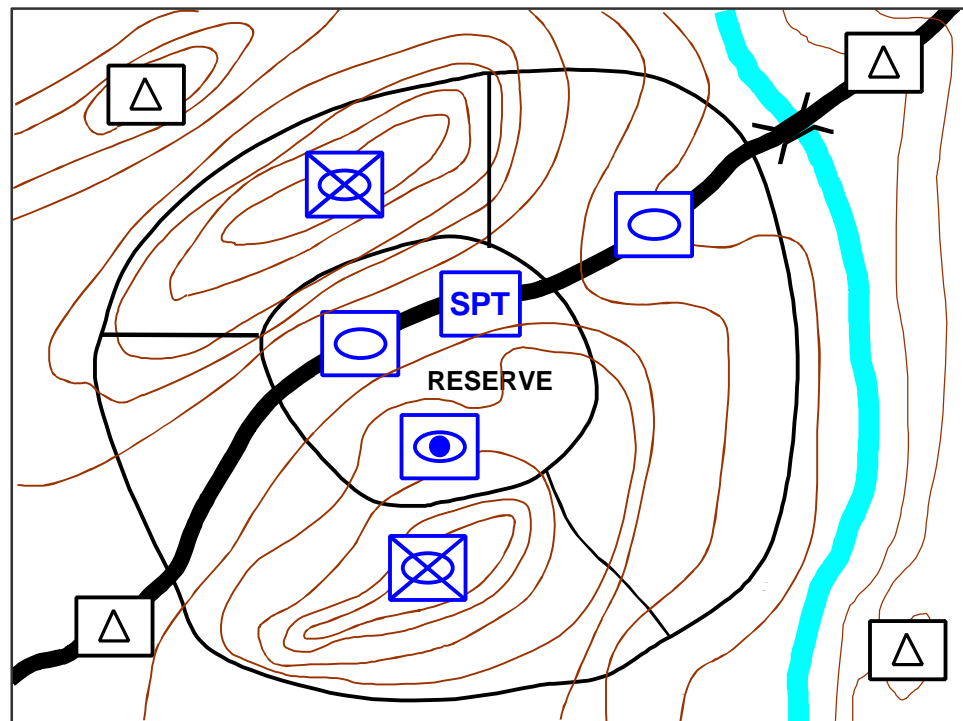
**9-107.** Within an area defense, the commander's use of a defense in depth accepts the possibility that the enemy may force a crossing at a given point. The depth of the defense should prevent the enemy from rapidly exploiting its success. It also defuses the enemy's combat power by forcing him to contain bypassed friendly defensive positions in addition to continuing to attack positions in greater depth. Once the enemy force secures several bridgeheads, the defending force moves to contain the bridgehead. The defending force commander may choose not to counterattack until he can mass overwhelming combat power. In this case he will probably choose to eliminate the bridgeheads sequentially; however, he risks allowing the enemy to establish and fortify bridgehead-crossing sites sufficiently to prevent the counterattack force from eliminating them.

**9-108.** The mobile defense gives the enemy force an opportunity to cross the obstacle with a portion of its force. The commander conducting a mobile defense along a linear obstacle normally employs minimal forces along the obstacle as his fixing force. This generally allows the enemy to cross in at least one location. Once the enemy has partially crossed and the obstacle divides his forces, the commander conducts shaping operations to isolate the enemy bridgehead. Once the bridgehead is isolated, the defending commander launches a decisive attack by the striking force to destroy that



isolated enemy bridgehead. He may also choose this technique when the enemy is likely to use weapons of mass destruction.

**9-109.** Alternatively, in a mobile defense, the commander may take advantage of the terrain to hide a striking force until the enemy's forward elements pass this force. Until committed, the striking force maintains a perimeter defense. This technique closely resembles the use of stay-behind forces. Similarly, the commander may order units inadvertently bypassed by the enemy not to break out immediately so that he may capitalize on their position to destroy the enemy.



**Figure 9-9. Perimeter Defense**

#### **PERIMETER DEFENSE**

**9-110.** The commander can employ the perimeter defense as an option when conducting an area or mobile defense. He also employs it in many security operations, such as a base defense. A perimeter defense is oriented in all directions. Aggressive patrolling and security operations outside of the perimeter are prerequisite requirements for a successful perimeter defense. These activities can be undertaken by the unit within the perimeter or by another force, such as the territorial defense forces of a host nation. The unit can organize a perimeter defense to accomplish a specific mission, such as protecting a fire base.

or providing immediate self-protection, such as during resupply operations when all-around security is required. The commander establishes a perimeter when the unit must hold critical terrain, such as a strongpoint, or when it must defend itself in areas where the defense is not tied in with adjacent units. This occurs when the unit is operating behind enemy lines or when it is securing an isolated objective, such as a bridge, mountain pass, or airfield. A unit may also form a perimeter when it has been bypassed and isolated by the enemy and it must defend in place, or it is located in the friendly rear area within the confines of a base or base cluster. Usually, perimeter defenses are organized by company-size forces in the rear area and by battalion- and brigade-size units elsewhere on the battlefield. (See Figure 9-9.) However, divisions and corps can also organize a perimeter defense when necessary.

**9-111.** A major characteristic of a perimeter defense is a secure inner area with most of the combat power located on the perimeter. Another characteristic is the ease of access for resupply operations. The commander coordinates direct and indirect fire plans to prevent accidental engagement of neighboring friendly units and noncombatants. Normally, the reserve centrally locates to react to a penetration of the perimeter at any point.

**9-112.** Perimeters vary in shape depending on the terrain and situation. If the commander determines the most probable direction of enemy attack, he may weight that part of the perimeter to cover that approach. The perimeter shape conforms to the terrain features that best use friendly observation and fields of fire. The commander can increase the effectiveness of the perimeter by tying it into a natural obstacle, such as a river, which allows him to concentrate his combat power in more threatened sectors.

#### **Organization of Forces**

**9-113.** The commander may employ all of his forces forward along the perimeter or establish a defense in depth within the perimeter. The commander employs patrols, raids, ambushes, air attacks, and supporting fires to harass and destroy enemy forces before they make contact with the perimeter, thus providing defense in depth with both techniques.

**9-114.** In the first technique, he places all of his subordinate units in positions along the perimeter. The perimeter is divided into subordinate unit AOs with boundaries and coordinating points. (See Figure 9-10.) This reduces the possibility of fratricide within the perimeter and maximizes the amount of combat power on the perimeter.

**9-115.** The construction of an outer and inner perimeter creates some depth in the defense in the second technique. Using a brigade assembly area as an example, the

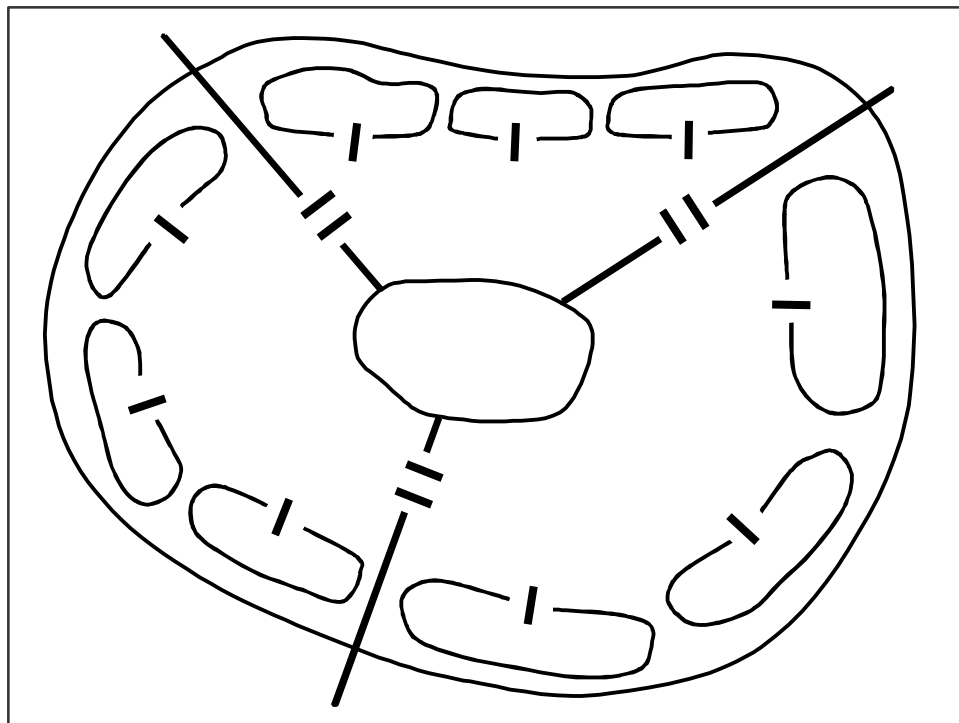


Figure 9-10. All Company Teams on the Perimeter

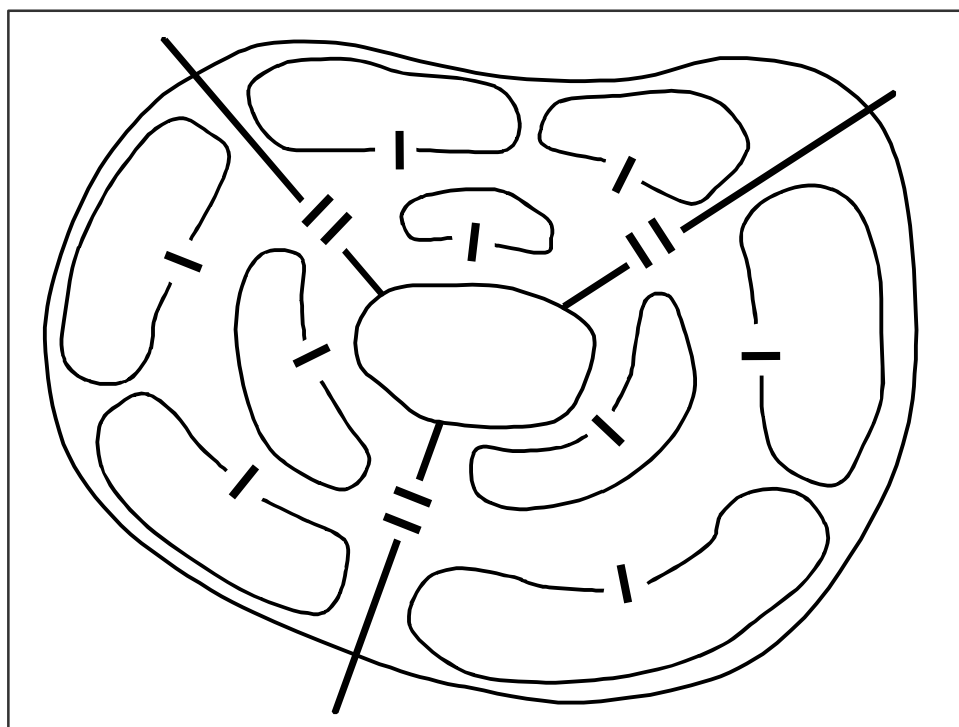
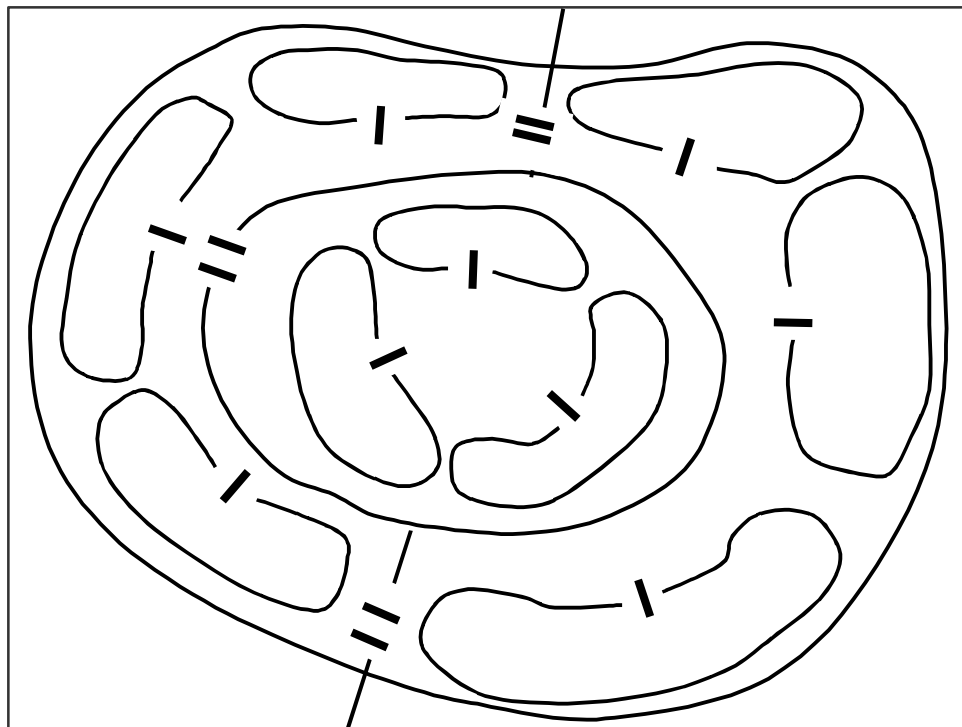


Figure 9-11. Three Battalion TFs on Perimeter, Co/Teams Positioned in Depth



**Figure 9-12. Two Battalion TFs on the Perimeter, One in Reserve**

commander places two companies in each battalion task force along the outer perimeter and one company in reserve along the inner perimeter. (See Figure 9-11.) This configuration gives depth to the battalion task force's positions and facilitates control. It also gives one company from each battalion task force the mission to support frontline platoons. It enables the company commander to locate any indirect fire systems, such as mortars, near the reserve platoon, enhancing control and security. Alternatively, the commander could elect to assign two battalion task forces to the outer perimeter and a third battalion to an inner perimeter and thus retain a larger, more cohesive central reserve. (See Figure 9-12.)

**9-116.** Regardless of the method used, the inner perimeter should be far enough from the outer perimeter to prevent the enemy from suppressing both lines of positions with the same fires. However, the inner perimeter must be close enough to support the outer perimeter with small-arms fire. The commander ensures that gaps on the outer perimeter between units in open terrain are covered by fire. The commander should allow no gaps between defensive fighting positions when his unit is in restrictive terrain with restricted fields of fire and observation. This may mean that a given size unit defends along a narrower frontage than on more open terrain. The commander may also have to employ all of his subordinate units on the line formed by the perimeter. The commander ensures

that outer perimeter positions have rearward protection from inner perimeter weapons once the inner perimeter is established.

**9-117.** Combat vehicles supporting the defense are normally assigned firing positions on the perimeter to cover the most likely mounted avenues of approach. The commander should select and prepare alternate and supplemental firing positions and routes to and from them. If the perimeter has several mounted avenues of approach leading to it, the commander may elect to hold his combat vehicles in hide positions until the enemy approaches. Units prepare routes, firing positions, and range cards in advance for all positions. Small unit leaders must ensure that vehicles do not destroy communication wires when they displace from one position to another.

**9-118.** The need to hold or protect features — such as bridges, airfields, or landing zones — from enemy observation and fires may restrict the positioning of units within a perimeter. These factors, as well as the inability to achieve depth, make a perimeter defense vulnerable to penetration by heavy enemy forces. The commander reduces these vulnerabilities by:

- Developing reconnaissance and surveillance plans that provide early warning.
- Positioning antiarmor weapons systems on armor-restrictive terrain to concentrate fires on armor approaches.
- Providing as much depth as the diameter of the perimeter allows through the placement of security elements, the reserve, and secondary sectors of antiarmor weapons fire.
- Constructing obstacles to fix or block the enemy so that he can be effectively engaged.

**9-119.** If isolation from other friendly units drives the commander to form a perimeter, such as during rear operations, CS and CSS elements from other units may seek the perimeter's protection. These elements are given defensive missions based on their capabilities. The commander coordinates and integrates any fire support provided from outside the perimeter into the overall defensive plan. This extra fire support conserves the ammunition of units within the perimeter.

**9-120.** The commander normally employs any reconnaissance assets, such as a scout platoon, outside the perimeter to provide early warning. He may augment security with squad-size or smaller observation posts that are provided and controlled by units on the perimeter. He positions these security elements to observe avenues of approach. Patrols cover areas that cannot be observed by stationary elements. Any security forces operating outside the perimeter must coordinate their passage of lines into and out of the perimeter with the appropriate perimeter units.

## Control Measures

The map shows the study area with the following features:

- Study Site (AG7001):** Located at the bottom left, marked with a cross and labeled "AG7001".
- Study Animals:**
  - EA SKUNK (AG7002):** Located at the bottom center, marked with a cross and labeled "AG7002 EA SKUNK".
  - EA WEASEL (AG7003):** Located at the top right, marked with a cross and labeled "AG7003 EA WEASEL".
- Other Sites:**
  - AG7005:** Located at the top center, marked with a cross.
  - AG1201:** Located at the bottom center, marked with a cross.
- Scale Bar:** A line segment labeled "2.502 MORT" and "FPP" is shown near the bottom left.
- North Arrow:** A small arrow pointing upwards is located near the bottom left.
- Map Features:** The map includes a large irregular shape representing the study area, with several smaller shapes inside. A line labeled "3" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "16" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "7" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "8" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "17" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "5" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "11" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "13" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "13 SP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "16" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "7 RP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "8 RP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "17" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "5 SP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "11" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "13" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "13 SP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "16" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "7 RP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "8 RP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "17" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "5 SP" points to a specific location within the study area. A line labeled "11" points to a specific location within the study area.

## Planning for a Perimeter Defense

9 - 40

consideration when selecting and organizing the perimeter defense. The commander must emphasize supply economy and protect existing supply stocks since aerial resupply is vulnerable to weather and enemy fires .

#### **Execution of a Perimeter Defense**

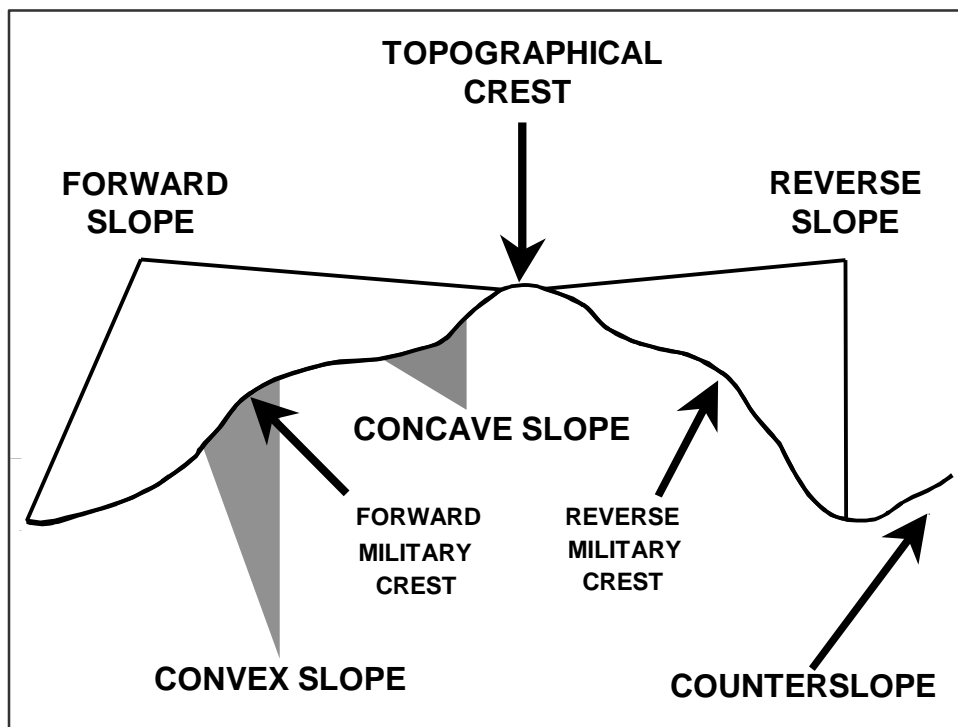
**9-124.** Attacks against a perimeter may range from long-range sniper, mortar, or rocket fire; to attacks by suicide demolition squads; to attacks by major enemy ground and air forces. Mortars, artillery, tanks, and antiarmor missile systems from within the perimeter engage the enemy at long ranges. As the enemy comes within small-arms range, other weapons on the perimeter engage him. If the assault continues, the force employs its available final protective fires (FPFs). If the enemy penetrates the perimeter, the reserve blocks the penetration or counterattacks to restore the perimeter. After committing the initial reserve, the commander must reconstitute another reserve to meet other threats. This force normally comes from an unengaged unit on another portion of the perimeter. If the commander uses an unengaged force to constitute a new reserve, he must retain sufficient forces to defend the vacated sector, unless he is forced to assume that degree of risk.

**9-125.** Combat service support elements may provide support from within the perimeter or from another location, depending on the mission and the status of the unit forming the defensive perimeter, the type of transport available, the weather, and the terrain. Units in contested areas without secure ground lines of communication are often resupplied by air.

#### **REVERSE SLOPE DEFENSE**

**9-126.** The reverse slope defense is organized on the portion of a terrain feature or slope that allows the main defensive positions to be masked from enemy observation and direct fire by the topographical crest. This technique, which is generally useful at lower tactical levels such as brigade and below, may be used by all or part of the defending force.

**9-127.** The commander bases a successful reverse slope defense on denying the topographical crest to the enemy, either by fire or physical occupation. Although the crest may not be occupied by the defending unit in strength, control of the crest by fire is essential for success. This defensive situation reduces the effects of massive indirect fire (mortar, artillery, and close-air support) and draws the battle into the small-arms range of infantry weapons. Use of the reverse slope defense provides the defending force with an opportunity to gain surprise. Its goal is to make the enemy commit his forces against the forward slope of the defense, causing his forces to attack in an uncoordinated fashion across the exposed topographical crest. Firing from covered and concealed positions



**Figure 9-14. A Hill in Cross-Section**

throughout the battle area, the defending force maintains a distinct advantage over the exposed enemy attacker and canalizes him through unfamiliar terrain into kill zones. The terminology associated with the reverse slope defense is shown in Figure 9-14.

**9-128.** The commander chooses to conduct a reverse slope defense when:

- The forward slope is untenable because of the density or accuracy of enemy fires.
- The crest and forward slope offer little cover or concealment.
- The forward slope has been lost or has not been seized.
- Units on the flanks can adequately cover the forward slope.
- An unfavorable salient or reentrant in the forward friendly disposition is unavoidable.
- Variance in the force's tactical pattern is advisable to deceive or surprise the enemy.
- The commander is forced to assume a hasty defense while in contact with or in proximity of the enemy.

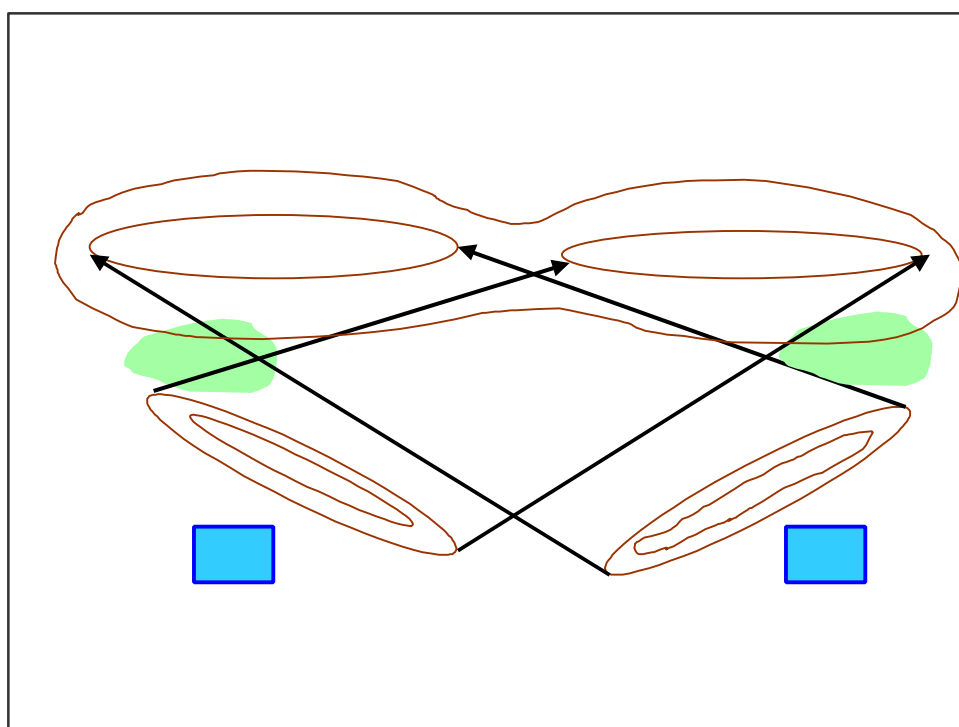
**9-129.** The reverse slope defense may deceive the enemy regarding the true location and organization of the main defensive positions. This defense protects the main defensive positions from preparation fires and causes the enemy to deploy into assault formations prematurely. The forward crest of the main defensive positions limits the enemy's observation. It reduces the effectiveness of enemy indirect fires and close air support and renders his direct fire weapons ineffective. The defending force may bring



surprise fires to bear on the enemy as he crests the high ground. Units on the reverse slope have more freedom of movement until the crest is lost.

**9-130.** The use of the reverse slope defense has several disadvantages, such as:

- The effective range of direct fire weapons may be limited.
- Once security elements withdraw, the enemy can advance largely unimpeded until he has crested the high ground in front of the main defensive positions.
- The enemy has the advantage of attacking downhill.
- Maintaining observation of the enemy is difficult.
- In some instances, obstacles on the forward slope cannot be effectively covered by fire.



**Figure 9-15. Oblique Defilade**

### Organization of Forces

**9-131.** The commander places his overwatching elements forward of the topographic crest and on the flanks of the position in a valley or depression. Another variation available to the commander is to organize a system of reverse slope defenses firing to the oblique defilade, each covering the other. For example, in Figure 9-15, the two units defending on the reverse slope cannot engage half of the hill to their direct front because of line of sight restrictions caused by small forests, but they can cover each other through the use of oblique defilade.

**9-132.** The defending force positions its reconnaissance and security elements where it can observe the forward slope, the terrain forward of it, and other approaches to the

defending position. Security elements destroy enemy reconnaissance assets, delay the enemy, disorganize his attack, and deceive him regarding the exact location of the main defense. The commander should position his reconnaissance and surveillance assets in observation posts (OPs) located near or forward of the topographical crest to provide long-range observation of both the enemy's flanks and front. Forces manning these OPs, which can be provided by the commander's reserve, may vary in size from a two-man buddy team to a rifle squad or a multiple combat vehicle section in each position. The commander should employ sufficient forces to provide observation and a security screen for the MBA on ground that should be retained. During darkness and periods of reduced visibility, he should strengthen these detachments in size and numbers to provide security against infiltration or surprise attack. Aggressive night combat patrols and ambushes are an essential part of the security process.

**9-133.** The commander organizes the main defensive positions to maximize concentrated, surprise fires on the enemy as he crosses the topographical crest. In a reverse slope defense, the key position denies enemy penetration and supports forward elements by fire. The defending force maintains observation and fires over the entire forward slope as long as possible to destroy enemy forces, thus preventing the enemy from massing for a final assault. From defensive positions on the reverse slope, the close-in battle builds in intensity. The defending force does not fire its direct fire weapons, which are located throughout the MBA (adjacent slope positions, counterslope positions, or reverse slope positions), until suitable targets appear. At the same time, the force shifts its indirect fires forward of the military slope and the crest.

**9-134.** When possible, other units on complementary terrain should support units in reverse slope positions. This is especially desirable when those supporting units can observe and place fires on the crest and forward slope. In a defense on a counterslope (reverse forward slope), fires must cover the area immediately in front of the reverse slope positions to the topographical crest. The commander organizes defensive positions to permit fires on enemy approaches around and over the crest and on the forward slopes of adjacent terrain features, if applicable. The key factors that affect the organization of these areas are mutually supporting covered and concealed positions, numerous existing and reinforcing obstacles, the ability to bring devastating fires from all available weapons onto the crest, and a counterattack force. Depending on the terrain, the most desirable location for the reserve may be on the counterslope or the reverse military crest of the counterslope.

## Control Measures

**9-135.** Defensive control measures introduced in previous chapters apply equally to the reverse slope defense. The commander places his engagement areas and obstacles on the reverse slope. The topographical crest normally marks the far edge of the engagement area. It must be dominated by fires to prevent the enemy from being able to successfully engage the defending force.

## Execution of a Reverse Slope Defense

**9-136.** When executing a reverse slope defense, the commander places special emphasis on:

- A fire support plan to prevent the enemy's occupation and use of the topographical crest.
- The proper organization of the forward slope to provide observation across the entire front and security to the main battle positions.
- A counterattack plan that specifies measures necessary to clear or regain the crest from the enemy.
- Fire support to destroy, disrupt, and attrit enemy forces on the forward slope.

**9-137.** The commander normally places his final protective fires along the topographical crest and employs them as the enemy reaches the first row of defiladed obstacles. He uses his reserve to counterattack and expel the enemy from the topographical crest if massed indirect fires do not defeat the attack. As always, in a reverse slope defense, the commander can employ his designated reserve to conduct sustainment area security operations, prepare withdrawal routes, provide flank security, and conduct other actions with the understanding that this increases the time required to reassemble the reserve and prepare it to support the defense.

**9-138.** The reverse slope defense pursues offensive opportunities through surprise and deceptive actions. It is uniquely suited to infantry forces in mountainous terrain. When conducting a reverse slope defense, surprise results from defending in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. Once this defense is employed successfully to halt an enemy attack, it may have limited value a second time because the effect of surprise will be difficult to attain. For additional information on the use of a reverse slope defense, see FM 7-30, *The Infantry Brigade*, and other brigade- and lower-echelon field manuals.

## TRANSITION OPERATIONS

**9-139.** If a defense is successful and accomplishes its mission, the commander anticipates and seeks the opportunity to transition to the offense. Alternatively, if the defense is unsuccessful, the commander will need to transition from a defensive posture into retrograde operations. Transition from one type of operation to another requires

mental, as well as physical, agility on the part of the commanders, staffs, and units involved.

**9-140.** Deliberate contingency planning for either event greatly assists the transition process. Deliberate planning allows the commander to set the conditions necessary for a successful transition. Such planning addresses the need to control the tempo of operations, maintain contact with both enemy and other friendly forces, and keep the enemy off balance. It establishes the procedures by which a unit reconstitutes itself for the next mission. In accordance with the factors of METT-TC, it establishes the required organization of forces and those control measures necessary for success.

**9-141.** Such contingency planning decreases the amount of time involved in adjusting the tempo of combat operations when a unit transitions from defensive to offensive operations. It does this by allowing subordinate units to simultaneously plan and prepare for subsequent operations. Such preparations typically include resupplying unit basic loads and repositioning or reallocating supporting systems. Chapters 4-8 address the planning, preparation, and execution of all types of offensive operations.

**9-142.** Such contingency planning also reduces the amount of time and confusion inherent when a unit is unsuccessful in its defensive efforts and must transition to retrograde operations. It does this through designating units to conduct denial operations and early evacuation of casualties and inoperative equipment. The intent of the retrograde operations is to preserve the force as a combat-capable formation until the commander can establish those conditions necessary for a successful defense. Chapter 12 discusses retrograde operations.

*"Regardless of the considerations which dictated the adoption of a defensive attitude, the tactics of defensive combat are essentially to develop the maximum firepower against an advancing enemy, to reduce our own losses by a better knowledge and utilization of the terrain, and thereby to stop the enemy's advance or throw him back by counterattack."*

**FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations, May 22, 1941, Paragraph 652**

## CHAPTER 10

# THE AREA DEFENSE

The area defense is a type of defensive action that concentrates on denying an enemy force access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright. An area defense capitalizes on the strength inherent in closely integrated organization of the ground. The commander may assign corps, divisions, and separate brigades the task of conducting an area defense as part of their mission. Subordinate echelons defend within their assigned area of operations as part of a larger echelon operation.

**10-2.** A commander should conduct an area defense when the following conditions occur:

- The terrain affords natural lines of resistance and limits the enemy to a few well-defined avenues of approach, thereby restricting the enemy's maneuver.
- The forces available have less mobility than the enemy.
- The terrain and lack of air superiority limit the striking force's options in a mobile defense to a few probable employment options.
- There is enough time to organize the position.
- When directed to defend or retain specified terrain.
- When he cannot resource a striking force.

**10-3.** The commander conducting an area defense combines static and dynamic actions to accomplish his assigned mission. Static actions usually consist of fires from prepared positions. Dynamic actions include using the fires provided by units in prepared positions as a base for counterattacks and repositioning them between defensive positions. The commander can use his reserve and uncommitted forces to conduct these counterattacks and spoiling attacks to desynchronize the enemy or prevent him from massing.

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## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**10-4.** The commander organizes his force to accomplish reconnaissance, security, main battle area, reserve, and sustainment operations. He has the option of defending forward or defending in depth. When the commander defends forward within an AO, he organizes his force so that he commits most of his combat power early in the defensive effort. To accomplish this he may deploy forces forward or plan counterattacks well forward in the MBA or even forward of the MBA. If the commander has the option of conducting a defense in depth, he uses his security forces and forward MBA element to identify, define, and control the depth of the enemy's main effort while holding off secondary thrusts. This allows him to conserve his combat power, strengthen his reserve, and better resource the counterattack.

## RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS

**10-5.** The commander directs his reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) assets to determine the locations, strength, and intentions of the attacking enemy force before defensive operations begin and throughout the conduct of the defense. The commander places a high priority on early identification of the enemy's decisive operation(s). He may need to complement surveillance with combat actions that test enemy intentions. Fighting for information can have two benefits: it can force the enemy to reveal his intentions and disrupt his preparations.

**10-6.** In the defense, RISTA operations overlap the unit's planning and preparing phases. Leaders of organizations performing reconnaissance tasks must understand that they often deploy before the commander fully develops his plan and must be responsive to changes in orientation and mission. The commander ensures that his staff fully plans, prepares, and executes reconnaissance missions.

## SECURITY OPERATIONS

**10-7.** The commander balances the need to create a strong security force to shape the battle with the resulting diversion of combat power from his main body's decisive operation(s). The commander usually allocates security forces to provide early warning and protect those forces, systems, and locations necessary for the conduct of his decisive operation(s) from unexpected enemy contact. On a battlefield where forces are contiguous with one another, the location of these security forces is usually in front of the main defensive positions. On a noncontiguous battlefield, they are located between the protected force and known or suspected enemy locations.

**10-8.** Echelon security forces normally conduct screen or guard missions at the battalion and brigade level. At division level and above, the commander may use a covering force. A division commander may elect to have his security force conduct a guard mission if a corps covering force exists. Because an area security mission usually ties in closely with flank units, flank security forces are needed if there are gaps on the unit's flanks, which occurs during noncontiguous operations, or if gaps develop during the operation. A flank screen or guard is critical if an enemy avenue of approach into the defended area from the flanks could be uncovered during the defense. A commander does not normally assign a force the mission of conducting rear guard or rear cover during contiguous operations since it is unlikely that his force's sustainment area will become uncovered during the defense. He will resource sustainment area security forces to include a tactical combat force or accept the risk to his sustainment effort of not performing this function.

#### **MAIN BATTLE AREA OPERATIONS**

**10-9.** The commander builds his decisive operations around identified points, such as key terrain or high-payoff targets. The commander's decisive operations in an area defense focus on retaining terrain using fires from mutually supporting, prepared positions supplemented by one or more counterattacks and the repositioning of forces from one location to another. The commander's decisive operation normally involves close combat since an area defense emphasizes terrain retention.

**10-10.** The commander normally positions his main body — the bulk of his combat power within the MBA — that location where he wants to conduct his decisive operation in an area defense. The commander organizes his main body to halt, defeat, and ultimately destroy attacking enemy forces. The majority of the main body deploys into prepared defensive positions within the MBA. However, mobile elements of the force are ready to deploy where and when they are needed.

#### **RESERVE OPERATIONS**

**10-11.** The reserve's primary mission is to conduct a decisive counterattack in accordance with previously prepared plans. A lower-echelon commander uses his reserve primarily to conduct local counterattacks to restore his defense's integrity. He may also use his reserve to seize the initiative from the enemy when the opportunity presents itself while acting within his senior commander's intent. The senior commander retains his reserve for commitment at the decisive moment to generate an overwhelming concentration of combat power to defeat the enemy. For example, a corps commander may

target the effects of his reserve against enemy fire support and follow-on forces needed to exploit the enemy's initial successes.

**10-12.** However, the reserve must be prepared to perform other missions. In certain situations, it may become necessary to commit the reserve to restore the integrity of the defense by blocking an enemy penetration or reinforcing fires into an engagement area.

These secondary tasks include:

- Reinforcing the defense of committed forces.
- Blocking or containing enemy forces that have penetrated defensive positions.
- Reacting to threats directed against the friendly force's sustainment effort. (This includes acting as the designated tactical combat force (TCF) when a separate TCF cannot be resourced.)
- Relieving depleted units and providing for continuous operations.
- Extending the flanks of a defending unit to prevent its envelopment.
- Covering a retrograde movement.

**10-13.** Defending commanders are usually hard-pressed to establish and resource reserve forces because they are normally facing an enemy with superior combat power. Nevertheless, commanders at each defensive echelon down to the company team level retain a reserve as a means of insuring mission accomplishment and for use in exploiting opportunities through offensive action. Commanders do not hold artillery and other fire support systems in reserve. (Such systems committed to sustainment area security operations are not in reserve.) Each echelon's reserve must have the mobility and striking power required to quickly isolate and defeat breakthroughs and flanking attempts. It must be able to seize and exploit fleeting opportunities in a powerful manner to throw the enemy's overall offensive off balance. The commander must resource his reserve so it can repeatedly attack, regroup, move, and attack again.

**10-14.** The size of the reserve should be related to the degree of uncertainty a commander has about the capabilities and intentions of the enemy. The more uncertainty that exists, the larger the commander's reserve should be. The reserve is also true. If the commander knows the size, dispositions, capabilities, and intentions of the enemy, he requires only a comparatively small reserve.

**10-15.** In some situations the commander may not be able to resource a separate reserve. Therefore, he may constitute all or a portion of his reserve from his security force after it conducts a rearward passage of lines through MBA units. If the security force composes the reserve for the area defense, the commander must withdraw it so it has sufficient time to occupy its reserve position, perform the necessary degree of reconsti-



tution, and prepare plans for its reserve role. However, this is not the preferred option. Before battle handover, the senior commander must state the acceptable risk to the security force or the disengagement criteria in quantifiable terms, such as friendly strength levels, time, or event. In this case, after completing the rearward passage, the security force moves to an assembly area to prepare for its subsequent operations. This area should be free from enemy interference and clear of MBA units, main supply routes, and the movements of other portions of the reserve.

**10-16.** The operations of the reserve usually become the echelon's decisive operation once committed. However, the commander can commit his reserve in a shaping operation to allow his ongoing decisive operation to achieve success. It no longer constitutes the force reserve upon its commitment in either case, so the commander should designate another uncommitted force as his reserve. If he does not have that flexibility, he must hold his reserve for commitment at the decisive moment and accept risk.

## **SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS**

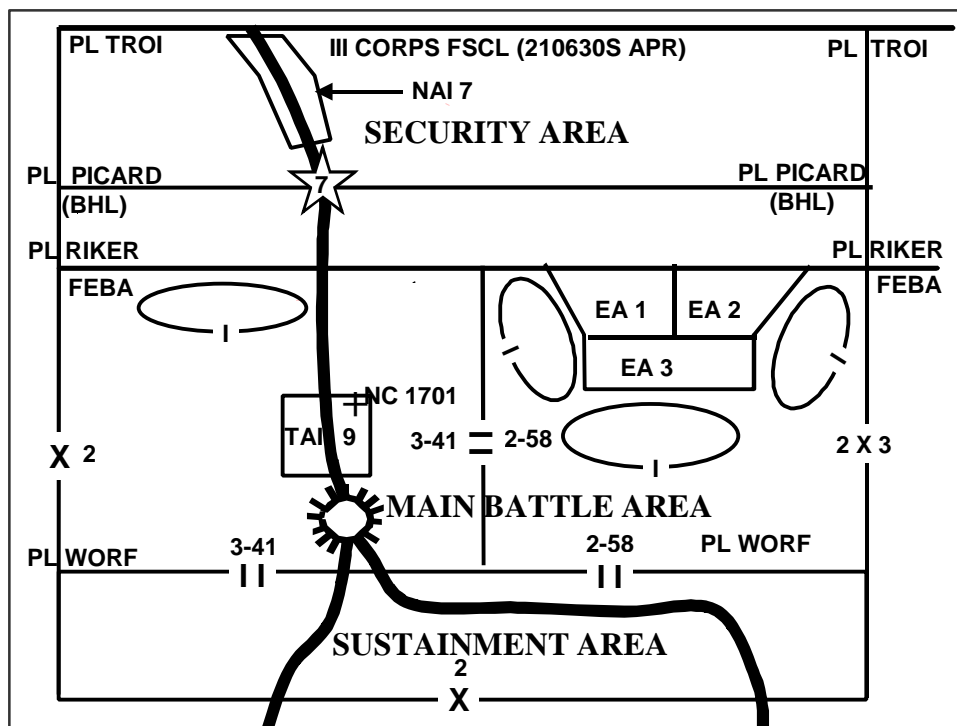
**10-17.** The commander resources his sustainment operations to preserve his freedom of action by the arming, fueling, maintenance and repair of equipment, movement, supply, manning, provision of personnel and health services, decontamination, and general engineering support to his forces. It also includes the protection of these sources of combat power and the lines of communication (LOC) to sustain his combat power.

**10-18.** The threat in the echelon's sustainment area may come from enemy air mobile or airborne units, infiltrators, or special operations forces. It may come from enemy forces that penetrate into the echelon's sustainment area. The extent of forces allocated to the security of sustainment operations depends on the enemy's capability to conduct such operations and the commander's assessment of the capability of his sustainment assets to provide self protection. Chapter 13 addresses sustainment area security operations in more detail.

## **CONTROL MEASURES**

**10-19.** The commander organizes an area defense by designating his main battle area (MBA) and assigning AOs, BPs, or both to subordinate units located within the MBA. He creates a security area in front of the MBA. When possible, the boundaries of the subordinate elements of the security force coincide with those of the major defending units in the MBA. The security area should be deep enough to make the enemy displace as much of his supporting forces as possible, such as cannon artillery, sensors, and air defense artillery gun systems, prior to carrying the attack into the main battle area. The

commander also designates his sustainment area. (See Chapter 13 for a discussion of security operations.)



**Figure 10-1. Example Control Measures for an Area Defense**

**10-20.** Area defense maneuver graphic control measures also include the fire support coordination line (FSCL), the AOs of subordinate units, battle positions (BPs), engage e-ment areas (EAs), the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), battle handover line (BHL), strongpoints, target reference points (TRPs), named areas of interest (NAIs), targeted areas of interest (TAIs), decision points, and various other fire control and countermobility control measures. (Figure 10-1 depicts the most common of these control measures.) These defensive control measures are defined in Chapters 3, 9, and Appendix B.

**10-21.** If the commander assigns a BP and an AO to a subordinate, the subordinate commander has specific guidance on the initial positioning of forces. The commander ensures that each of his subordinate units' defensive plans are synchronized, and that his control measures, such as contact points and phase lines, are sufficient to ensure the continued coordination and synchronization of the efforts of his subordinates. He is responsible for fire and movement planning between the positions of his subordinate units.

If subordinate unit commanders prepare their defensive plans in isolation, one or more assailable flanks between subordinate units could easily develop.

**10-22.** Control measures associated with the passage of lines by the security force are the battle handover line (BHL); primary and alternate routes ; contact points; start points; passage points; release points; tactical assembly areas; emergency CSS points; and positions for artillery, air defense, and other units. The organization of forces, control measures, planning, preparation, and execution of a passage of lines are the subject of Chapter 16.

## PLANNING AN AREA DEFENSE

**10-23.** The commander assigns missions, allocates forces, and apportions combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) resources within the operational framework of shaping, decisive, and sustainment operations introduced in Chapter 2. He decides where to concentrate his effort and where to take risks. The commander can rapidly redirect attack aviation and artillery systems initially allocated to shaping operations to support decisive operations at the appropriate time. (See Figure 10-2 for a graphical depiction of the organization of forces for an area defense in a contiguous AO. See Figure 10-3 for a graphical depiction of the organization of forces for an area defense in a non-contiguous AO.)

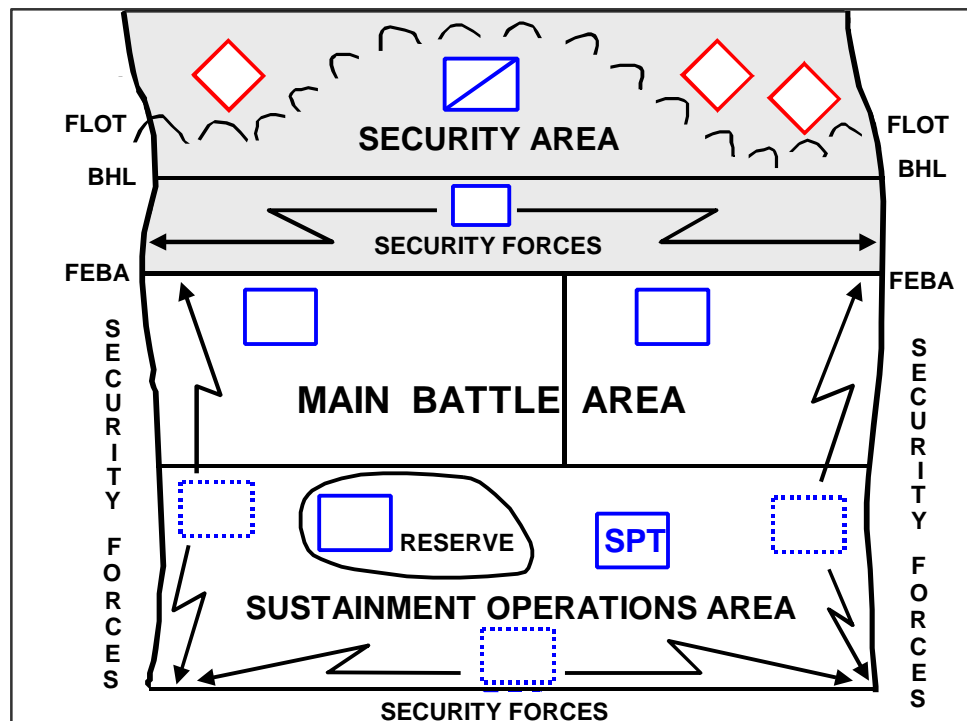
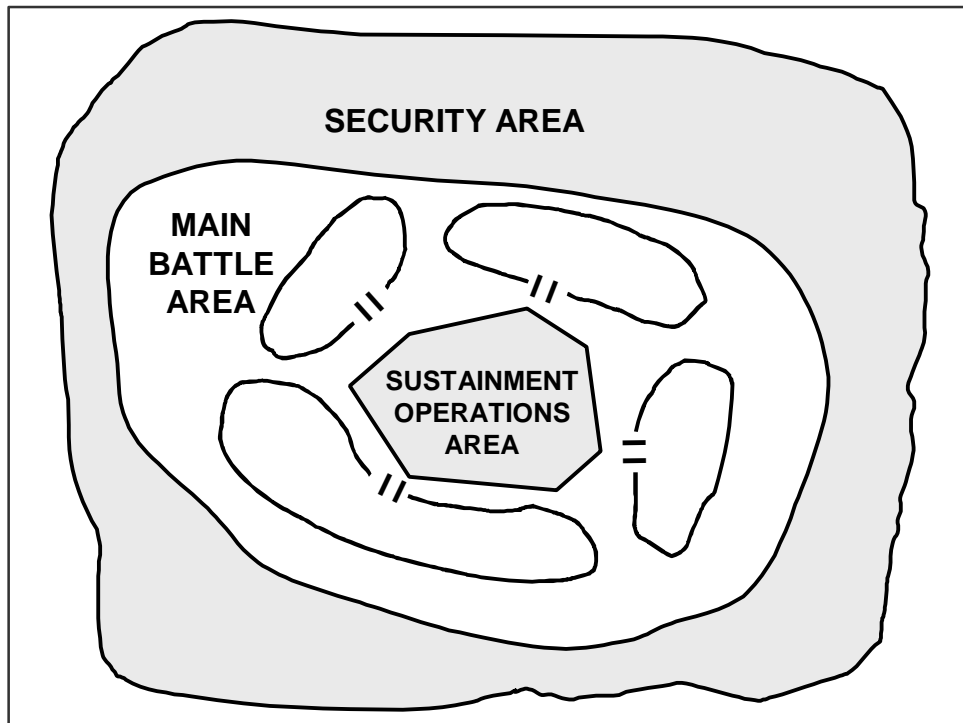


Figure 10-2. Organization of Forces for an Area Defense – Contiguous Area of Operations



**Figure 10-3. Organization of Forces for an Area Defense – Noncontiguous Area of Operations**

**10-24.** The commander describes his concept of operation in sufficient detail so that his staff and subordinate commanders understand precisely how he intends to fight the battle. He ensures the coordination of maneuver and supporting actions among his subordinates. Field Manual 101-5 discusses the military decision making process (MDMP). Those planning and preparation considerations outlined in Chapter 9 apply to the area defense.

**10-25.** The commander's keys to a successful area defense are:

- Capability to concentrate effects.
- Depth of the defensive area.
- Security.
- Ability to take full advantage of the terrain, such as intervisibility lines.
- Flexibility of defensive operations.
- Timely resumption of offensive actions.

The crux of the commander's defensive challenge is to gain time. He needs time to ensure a synchronized, effective defense. The commander organizes his defensive effort based on an analysis of the factors of METT-TC and the higher commander's concept. He decides where to concentrate his efforts and how to economize his forces. To succeed in its area defense mission, the unit must also counteract the enemy's initiative.

The commander should take advantage of available offensive opportunities that do not risk the integrity of his defense, such as a spoiling attack and counterattack.

**10-26.** In planning the conduct of an area defense, the commander has two basic choices in how he organizes his defensive positions to accomplish his mission. He can organize either a defense in depth or a forward defense. A higher commander may dictate the choice of maneuver or impose restrictions that eliminate a subordinate commander's choice of maneuver. These restrictions can include time, security concerns, and directed retention of specific terrain. These two deployment choices are not totally exclusionary. Part of a commander's forces can conduct a forward defense while the other part conducts a defense in depth.

**10-27.** The commander decides where the defensible terrain is located within his assigned AO based on its terrain characteristics and his estimate of the enemy's chosen course of action (COA) in determining his choice of maneuver. Those terrain characteristics include terrain relief patterns, avenues of approach into and within the AO, the location of any key or decisive terrain, existing obstacles and choke points to include rivers and fording sites. The other factors of METT-TC also influence the commander decision.

## **POSITION SELECTION**

**10-28.** Attempting to defend everything defends nothing. Therefore, the commander carefully designs his defense plan to ensure his defending force can halt the enemy attack and develop an opportunity to seize the initiative and undertake offensive operations. The cohesion of the defending force has a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the defense. The commander must be prepared to adjust the defensive dispositions to meet changes in the enemy's dispositions to maintain that cohesion if the defense is to remain viable.

**10-29.** The area defense concept requires that defensive positions accomplish their mission by defeating the enemy by fire, by absorbing the strength of the enemy's attack within the position, or by destroying the enemy through the use of a local counterattack. The commander combines the advantages of fighting from prepared positions, obstacles, planned fires, and local counterattacks to isolate and overwhelm selected enemy formations. He must be prepared to rapidly shift the nature and location of his decisive operation(s) throughout his area of operations. The commander may have to reposition defending units within their defensive positions or reposition between terrain features as he masses overwhelming effects against the attacking enemy. The defensive plan should

designate axes of advance and routes for the commitment or movement of reserves, or the forward or rearward passage of one unit through another. It should identify air axes for aerial maneuver by attack helicopters, air assault units, or fixed-wing aircraft. This capability to reposition is dependent on the defending force having superior tactical mobility. Without tactical mobility, defending forces stay in their prepared positions and accept the possibility of becoming decisively engaged.

**10-30.** The commander assigning the defensive mission defines the area to defend. A commander defending on a broad front is forced to accept gaps and conduct noncontiguous operations. Defending shallow areas of operations reduces flexibility and requires the commander to fight well forward. Narrow frontages and deep areas of operations increase the elasticity of an area defense by increasing the commander's maneuver options.

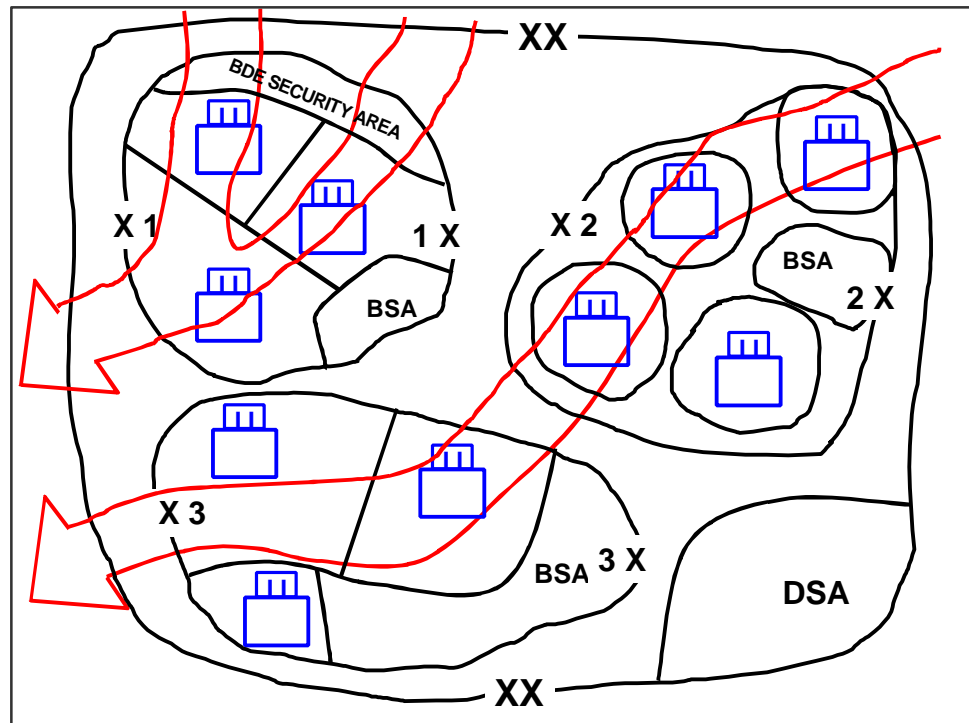
**10-31.** The ideal area defense is one in which effective mutual support exists throughout the width and depth of the defender's tactical positions. The commander organizes and occupies these positions based on their natural defensive strength; their retention ensures the integrity of his defense whether he employs a defense in an AO, defends by BPs, or employs a combination of AOs and BPs. He maintains tactical integrity within each defensive area. A unit conducting an area defense normally addresses the security requirements of each flank by assigning responsibility to a subordinate element or organizing a security force to specifically execute that mission.

### Defense in Depth

**10-32.** A defense in depth is normally the commander's preferred option. Forces defending in depth absorb the momentum of the enemy's attack by forcing him to attack repeatedly through mutually supporting positions in depth. Depth gives the commander's fire support assets time to generate decisive effects. Depth gives the defending commander multiple opportunities to concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power against the attacking enemy. This also provides more reaction time for the defending force to counter the attack. The commander gathers more information about the attacking enemy's intentions before he decisively commits to a course of action. This reduces the risk of the enemy force quickly penetrating the main line of defense.

**10-33.** The commander also employs a defense in depth when the enemy has the capability to employ large quantities of precision-guided munitions or weapons of mass destruction. Defense in depth results in units and facilities being dispersed throughout the defensive AO. The commander takes area damage control measures to reduce the

effects of weapons of mass destruction on the friendly force and denies the enemy lucrative targets. The degree of dispersal adopted by defending forces is first a function of the enemy's capabilities and then a function of the friendly forces' capability to rapidly concentrate the effects of overwhelming combat power at the desired locations.



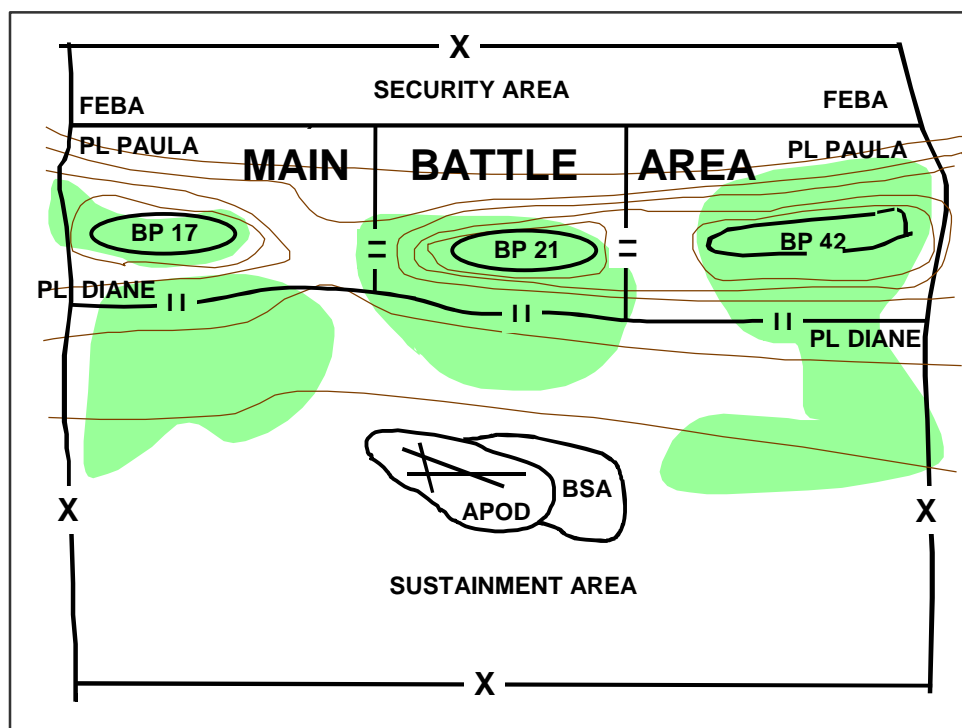
**Figure 10-4. Example of a Division Conducting a Defensive in Depth while Deployed in a Noncontiguous Area of Operations with Enemy Avenues of Approach Depicted**

**10-34.** The commander positions his units in successive layers of battle positions along likely enemy avenues of approach when he conducts a defense in depth. (See Figure 10-4.) The commander usually decides to conduct a defense in depth when:

- The mission is not restrictive and allows the commander to fight throughout the depth of the battlefield.
- The terrain does not favor a defense well-forward and there is better defensible terrain deeper within the AO.
- The AO is deep compared to its width and there is significant depth available.
- The cover and concealment on or near the FEBA is limited.
- The enemy has several times the combat power of the defender.

**10-35.** Because a forward defense has no time or space to reposition forces, divisions and corps employing a defense in depth can conduct an area defense on a wider frontage than they can if they adopt a forward defense. A defense in depth allows the com-

mander to use his security and forward MBA forces to identify the enemy's decisive operation and control the depth of the enemy's penetration into the MBA. By their defensive actions they provide the commander with time to react to enemy actions.



**Figure 10-5. Example of a Brigade Conducting a Forward Defense in a Contiguous Area of Operations**

### Forward Defense

**10-36.** In a forward defense the commander conducts his decisive operations from forward defensive positions near the FEBA. (See Figure 10-5.) He concentrates a significant portion of his available combat power into engagement areas (EAs) along the FEBA. His intent is to prevent significant enemy penetration into the defensive area. The commander conducting a forward defense fights to retain these positions along the FEBA and violently counterattacks any enemy penetration. However, if the enemy penetrates the main defensive positions, the defender's lack of depth may allow the enemy to rapidly exploit success.

**10-37.** In general, the commander uses a forward defense when a higher commander directs him to retain forward terrain for political, military, economic, and other reasons. Alternatively, a commander may choose to conduct a forward defense when the terrain in that part of his area of operations, including natural obstacles, favors the defending force. Terrain favors a forward defense when:



- The best defensive positions are located along the FEBA.
- Strong natural obstacles are located near the FEBA.
- Natural engagement areas occur near the FEBA.
- Cover and concealment in the rear portion of the AO is limited.

## POSITIONING THE RESERVE

**10-38.** Whatever the commander's choice — forward or in depth — once the enemy commits his forces, the defending commander has the ability to seize the initiative by counterattacking over familiar ground to destroy a halted, disorganized enemy while protected by overwatching fires from friendly positions. Whenever possible, the commander should direct these counterattacks against the enemy's rear or flanks. The commander's reserve is a key component of the counterattack.

**10-39.** The commander decides whether to orient his reserve on its most likely mission or its most important mission when deciding where to place his reserve. He expends significant effort during the planning process to ensure he can effectively use his reserve when needed. He may locate his reserve within the AO where it can employ the road network to rapidly displace throughout the AO in response to a number of opportunities or contingencies. The commander must consider terrain, main supply routes of forward units, enemy avenues of approach, and probable enemy penetrations when determining the exact location for his reserve. He may choose to initially position his reserve in a forward location to deceive the enemy and obscure subordinate unit boundaries, especially those of dissimilar units such as armor and light infantry.

**10-40.** In restrictive terrain that lacks routes for movement, the commander can task organize his reserve into small elements and position them where they can react quickly to local combat developments. Covered lateral and forward high-speed deployment routes should be available. In open terrain, the commander maintains a centrally located reserve positioned somewhat farther from the forward line own troops (FLOT). He considers the enemy's potential to employ weapons of mass destruction and conduct air interdiction when deciding where to position his reserve.

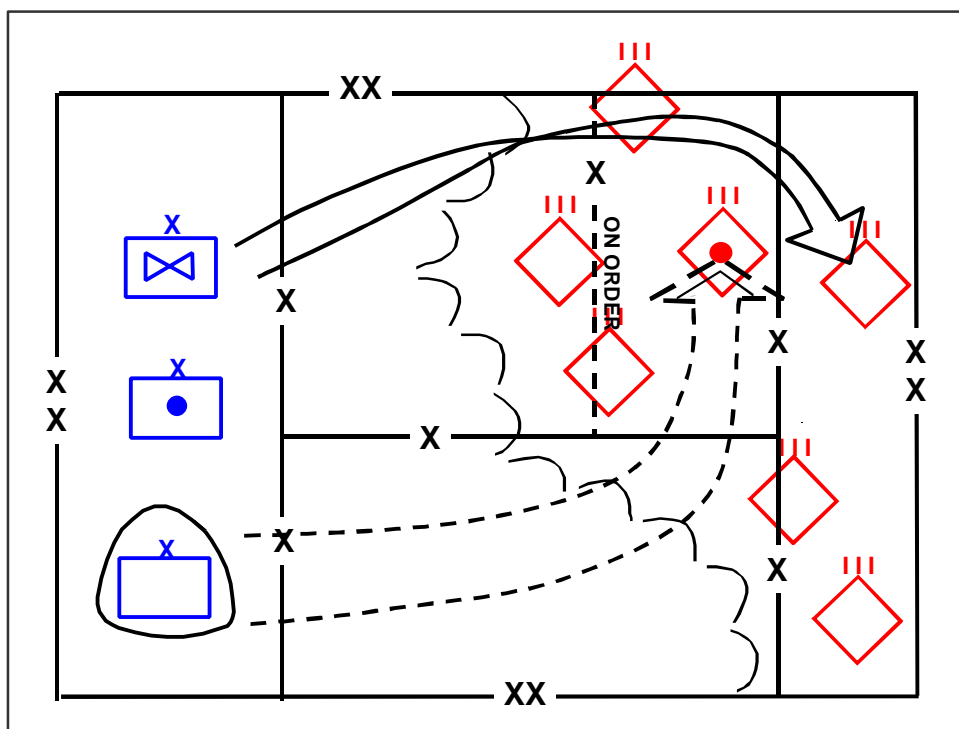
**10-41.** Whenever possible, the commander positions his reserve outside of the enemy's direct fire range. This is easier to achieve at higher echelons than it is at lower echelons. The reserve takes defensive measures to prevent it from being acquired and attacked by enemy indirect fire systems and weapons of mass destruction. These include camouflage, local security, and control of electronic emissions among others.

**10-42.** The commander also plans how to reconstitute his reserve once he commits his original reserve. Forces most easily designated are subordinate unit reserves. If the

commander's higher headquarters has not committed its reserve, he has more flexibility and can take greater risk in employing of his reserve.

### SPOILING ATTACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

**10-43.** Enemy movement into a named area of interest (NAI) helps determine the enemy's scheme of maneuver and possible objectives. The commander uses decision points and NAIs throughout his AO to trigger operations designed to counter the enemy's maneuver. The commander identifies targeted areas of interest (TAIs) for attack to support his operations. In an area defense, these operations include a counterattack and a spoiling attack. A spoiling attack resembles a reconnaissance in force in many ways. (See FM 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance*.) The force conducting the spoiling attack must be large and strong enough to develop the situation, protect itself, cause the enemy to react, and place the enemy's plan at risk.



**Figure 10-6. Division Counterattack**

**10-44.** The commander considers the enemy situation and estimates the time and distance factors of any follow-on enemy forces in planning a counterattack by his reserve and other forces. Then he determines which of his units will attack, where they will be after the attack, and what interdiction is necessary to isolate the targeted enemy element. (See Figure 10-6.) His counterattacking forces plan to avoid enemy strength when po s-

sible. The most effective attacks seize strong positions that permit the counterattacking force to deliver fire on an exposed enemy unit's flanks and rear. The counterattacking force must establish a viable defensive position before any following enemy units can make contact if it is tasked to stay and defend against enemy follow-on forces.

**10-45.** Counterattack plans include assumptions regarding the size and shape of the assumed penetration or enemy formation; the strength and composition of the enemy force; and the status of the reserve and forces in the MBA. Other factors that affect the counterattack include the capability to contain the enemy, shaping operations to support the attack, and the strength and responsiveness of the reserve at the time of the counterattack.

**10-46.** The commander's staff prepares counterattack plans and then allocates subordinate headquarters sufficient time to make their plans. If possible, the commander distributes his counterattack plans along with the basic defense plan. Reserve unit commanders conduct detailed counterattack planning that includes conducting reconnaissance, selection of multiple routes, determination of time and space factors, rehearsals, coordination with appropriate elements of the forward defending force, and fire planning. Based on rehearsals, the commander makes adjustments to the counterattack plans as necessary.

## **PREPARATION FOR AN AREA DEFENSE**

**10-47.** Preparations focus on planning those additional reconnaissance and intelligence operations required to answer the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR), refining the plan, increasing coordination and synchronization, and conducting shaping actions within the force's capability and operations security (OPSEC) guidelines. If the commander decides that he must conduct a deliberate defense but he knows the enemy will attack before he is prepared, he may have to commit substantial forces to security operations or conduct a spoiling attack to buy time and space to prepare for a deliberate defense.

**10-48.** A unit normally transitions to the defense after it completes offensive operations or in an assembly area. The commander issues a warning order that states the mission and identifies any special considerations. His staff conducts detailed planning while the rest of the unit completes its current mission. The staff coordinates for the prepositioning of ammunition and barrier material in a secure area near the unit's defensive positions prior to starting the operation.

**10-49.** Before occupying any position, leaders at all echelons conduct some type of reconnaissance. This reconnaissance effort is as detailed as the factors of METT-TC permit. This may consist of a simple map reconnaissance or a more detailed leader's reconnaissance and initial layout of the new position.

**10-50.** The defending unit occupies its defensive positions as soon as practical after receiving the mission. It conducts reconnaissance of the defensive area and establishes a forward security area before occupying the position. The unit may preposition supplies such as ammunition and barrier materiel once it establishes security. The unit can accomplish many defensive tasks simultaneously; the factors of METT-TC are the deciding consideration in establishing work priority, however, those priorities may be:

- Establish local security and deploy a security force.
- Identify engagement areas (EAs) where the commander wants to engage and destroy the enemy.
- Plan fire control measures, such as target reference points (TRPs), trigger lines, and final protective fires (FPFs) to support the EAs.
- Position key weapon systems to engage into the EAs and TRPs and develop range cards and sector sketches.
- Site obstacle groups to support weapon system.
- Designate and clear fields of fire.
- Prepare primary fighting positions based on the anticipated fighting conditions, such as the time of day and weather conditions.
- Emplace obstacles and survey indirect fire targets to support these obstacles.
- Provide concealment and camouflage for fighting and survivability positions as they are constructed.
- Install night and limited visibility aids, such as thermal hot spots and chemical lights on TRPs during daylight.
- Update range cards and sector sketches as required.
- Prepare alternate fighting positions.
- Designate and prepare supplementary positions.
- Designate hide positions and rehearse movements to and from fighting positions. (Units may place their combat and tactical vehicles in hide positions at any time while preparing the defensive position.)
- Position the reserve.
- Establish contact points with any adjacent units so that the defensive efforts of both units can be tied together.
- Emplace wire for communications.
- Prestock ammunition in revetments or bunkers where it can survive the enemy's preparatory fires.
- Rehearse movements under daylight and limited-visibility conditions.
- Improve mobility on counterattack routes.
- Continue to improve the defense.

**10-51.** Survivability positions enhance the strength of a defensive position by providing soldiers and weapon systems with some degree of cover from enemy fires. Units initiate construction of survivability positions in accordance with their priority of work

and continue to build and improve them until the last possible moment. The overhead cover provided varies with the location of the sheltered troops and enemy capabilities. As time and resources allow, the defending unit improves communications routes throughout its defensive positions to ease movement of supplies and forces, particularly the reserve. It quickly establishes wire communications between its various subordinate elements to reduce its electromagnetic signature.

**10-52.** The defending unit rehearses how to move to occupy alternate and supplementary positions to continue to engage the enemy if he progresses into the unit's defensive positions. It modifies existing plans based on the results of rehearsals and changes in the factors of METT-TC.

**10-53.** The commander ensures close coordination between his subordinates. During the preparation phase, he can take his subordinate commanders to a vantage point in the MBA to rehearse the battle and plan coordination between their units. This helps assist in the formation of common control measures for subordinate units.

**10-54.** The location, composition, and movement of the reserve are essential elements of friendly information. Enemy reconnaissance efforts focus on finding the reserve and reporting when and where it is committed. Avoiding detection by the enemy is vital to the success of the reserve.

**10-55.** The CSS rehearsal should be integrated into the maneuver rehearsal to verify that routes for support do not cross or conflict with routes used by reserve forces or other maneuver elements. The commander should balance the use of ammunition caches against the defending unit's ability to guard them. The commander should also check that alternate main supply routes (MSRs) are adequate to accommodate contingency plans and that changing MSRs can be accomplished effectively.

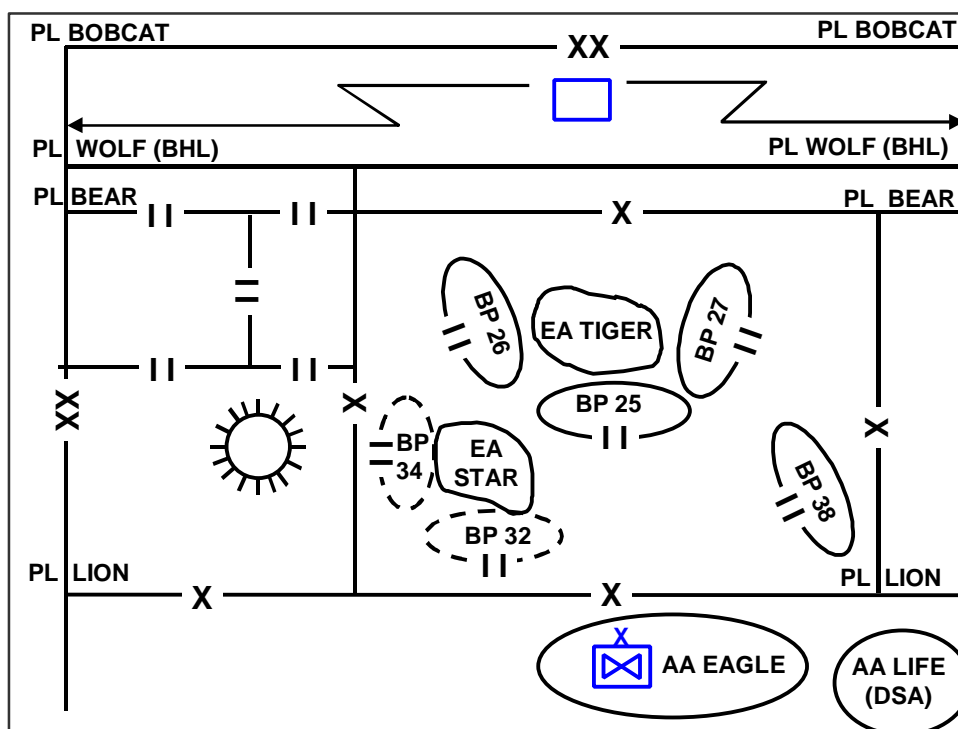
**10-56.** The commander ensures that his combat multipliers are completely integrated with his intended maneuver. Having key representatives from each of these multipliers simultaneously rehearse the plan with his subordinate maneuver unit is an effective technique for ensuring integration. After issuing the order and receiving briefbacks from his subordinate commanders and other leaders, he verifies that they have a common understanding of the plan and can execute it with minimal guidance.

## **EXECUTION OF AN AREA DEFENSE**

**10-57.** A successful area defense may not achieve a decision since an area defense generally focuses on denying enemy access to designated terrain for a specified time rather than on destroying the enemy. Ultimately, it must combine with or follow offensive op-

erations, such as attack. It provides time and helps to establish those conditions necessary to conduct decisive offensive operations.

**10-58.** A defending unit within the MBA uses a variety of tactics, techniques, and procedures to accomplish mission. At one end of the defensive continuum is a totally static defense oriented on terrain retention that depends on the use of firepower from fixed positions to deny terrain to the enemy. At the other end is a dynamic defense focused on the enemy; that defense depends on maneuver to disrupt and destroy the attacking enemy force.



**Figure 10-7. Example of an Area Defense Using Static and Dynamic Elements**

**10-59.** A commander combines the static element to control, stop, or canalize the attacking enemy and the dynamic element to strike and defeat him. A successful area defense uses forces in relatively fixed positions to create the opportunity for the reserve to strike at the enemy from an unanticipated direction and strength. (See Figure 10-7.) The defending force repeatedly lures the advancing enemy into engagement areas where it kills selected portions of the enemy.

**10-60.** In an area defense, defending forces fight mainly from prepared, protected positions to concentrate combat power effects against attempted enemy breakthroughs and

flanking movements. The commander uses mobile forces to cover gaps between defensive positions, reinforce those positions as necessary, and counterattack to seal penetrations or block enemy attempts at flanking movements.

**10-61.** The conduct of shaping operations in an area defense is similar to shaping operations in the offense. The factors of METT-TC determine how closely the commander synchronizes his shaping operations with his decisive operations. The commander conducts shaping operations designed to regain the initiative by limiting the attacker's options and disrupting the enemy's plan. He conducts shaping operations to prevent the enemy from massing and creates windows of opportunity for decisive offensive operations, allowing us to defeat him in detail. The commander also employs shaping operations to disrupt enemy operations by attacking command posts at critical stages in the battle or by striking and eliminating key elements, such as river crossing equipment and supplies in a region that contains numerous unfordable rivers. Reconnaissance and security operations are normally components of the echelon's shaping operations.

**10-62.** This manual divides execution into five steps for discussion purposes. These five phases are:

- Gain and maintain enemy contact.
- Disrupt the enemy.
- Fix the enemy.
- Maneuver.
- Follow through.

This is not meant to imply that these steps occur sequentially. In actual operations the activities described in each step may occur simultaneously.

#### **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**10-63.** Gaining and maintaining contact with the enemy in the face of determined enemy efforts to destroy friendly RISTA assets are vital to the success of defensive operations. As the enemy's attack begins, the defending unit's first concerns are to identify the enemy's committed units' positions and capabilities, determine his intent and direction of attack, and gain time to react. Initially, the commander accomplishes these goals in the security area. The sources of the combat information necessary to uncover this type of intelligence include reconnaissance and security forces, intelligence units, special operations forces, and aviation elements. The commander ensures the distribution of a common operational picture — information about the form and location of the enemy's attack — throughout the force during the battle as a basis for subordinate commanders' actions. The commander uses the information available to him in con-

junction with his military judgment to determine the point at which the enemy is committed to a course of action.

**10-64.** The security force seeks to strip enemy reconnaissance forces and hide the defending force's dispositions, capabilities, and intent at the same time as friendly RISTA assets help to determine the enemy's chosen course of action. Ideally, the fight in the security area should force the enemy to conduct a movement to contact against a prepared defense.

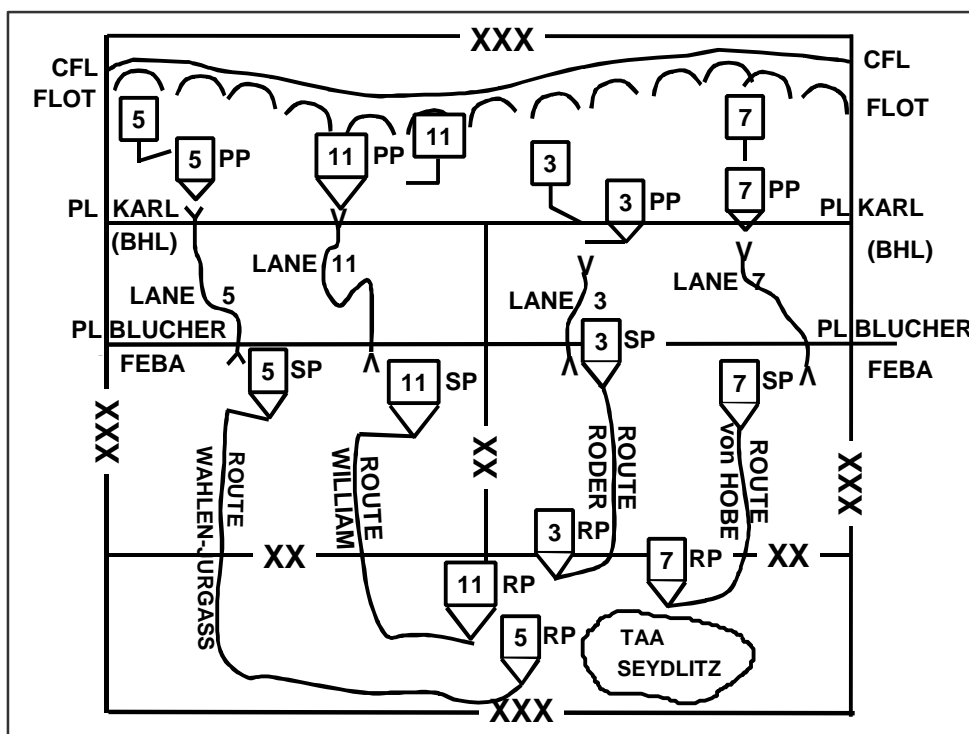


Figure 10-8. Battle Handover Line

**10-65.** A single force in the security area can perform both reconnaissance and security functions. The security force uses every opportunity for limited offensive action to delay and harass the enemy and to gain information. As the security element displaces, the commander makes preparations to pass it through or around the MBA force as quickly as possible by using multiple passage points, gaps, or lanes along the FEBA. This usually occurs in one location at a time until the security force has completely withdrawn. However, the security force may pass in sequence based on enemy pressure. Transfer of responsibility occurs forward of the FEBA at the BHL. (See Figure 10-8.) Taking advantage of previous liaison and plans, the security force makes any required



last-minute coordination with MBA forces at contact points to ensure its rapid passage through the MBA force.

**10-66.** The entire security force should not withdraw automatically as soon as the first enemy units reach the FEBA. By staggering its withdrawal to the tactical situation, the commander can leave in place security elements located in areas where the enemy has not advanced. The security force adjusts to the enemy's advance and continues to conduct security operations as far forward as possible. It continues to resist the enemy's shaping operations, such as the enemy's reconnaissance effort, thereby upsetting his coordination and allowing the MBA commander to fight one engagement or battle at a time. Doing this increases the chances for success even if the enemy attack penetrates into the MBA in some areas. In some cases, the security force can attack the enemy force from its rear, engage high-payoff targets, or drive between echelons to isolate leading enemy units.

**10-67.** As the enemy force approaches the MBA, the commander may order reconnaissance and surveillance assets within his security force to displace to one or both sides of the enemy penetration and continue to maintain surveillance. By observing and providing access to enemy flanks, these reconnaissance and surveillance elements can facilitate the conduct of friendly counterattacks. However, to prevent the encirclement of these assets, the commander may plan to monitor those areas where the enemy has not advanced into the MBA solely by technical means.

**10-68.** Handoff between the security force and MBA forces requires close coordination and occurs as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimize their vulnerability to enemy fire. The security force commander must retain freedom to maneuver until he initiates the passage of lines. The commander's fire support assets help cover the withdrawal of security forces. Combat support and CSS elements of the security force should move to the rear as early as possible to avoid hampering the movement of combat forces. Normally, battalion-size units of the security force hand off the battle to the brigades through which they pass.

**10-69.** The commander must consider the security force's next mission prior to the handover of the battle from the security force to MBA forces. Factors that may affect his decision are the current status of the security force, its subsequent mission preparation requirements, and the size and nature of the reserve required by the situation. He may decide to employ it immediately as his reserve, which would release his initial reserve for other tasks. Alternately, the commander may decide to use the security force to con-

duct additional security operations on the flanks of MBA forces as the battle progresses. However, it may be some time before the security force is ready for commitment. Therefore, the commander is more likely to wait until the security force has been reconstituted and the initial reserve has been committed before designating the former security force as his reserve.

**10-70.** The commander should base the location of his security force's assembly area on that force's follow-on mission. The commander wants those assembly areas located to rapidly support ongoing operations yet keeps withdrawn security units from interfering with ongoing decisive and shaping operations. After passage, the security force normally moves to these locations to prepare for subsequent operations. At a minimum he must rearm and refuel the security force. Additional CSS concerns include casualty evacuation, maintenance requirements, and resupply of the other classes of supply.

#### **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

**10-71.** The commander executes his shaping operations to disrupt the enemy regardless of his location within the area of operation. After making contact with the enemy, the commander seeks to disrupt his plan, his ability to control his forces, and his combined arms team. Ideally, the results of his shaping operations should force a disorganized enemy whose ability to synchronize its elements has been degraded to conduct a movement to contact against prepared defenses. Once the process of disrupting the enemy begins, it continues throughout the conduct of defensive operations.

**10-72.** The commander initiates his shaping operations simultaneously with the preparation of his MBA positions. These shaping operations typically focus on high-payoff targets, command and control nodes, engineer, fire support, and air defense assets for destruction or disruption. These shaping operations destroy the enemy's cohesion and disrupt the tempo of his approach to the main battle area. This, in turn, disrupts the timely introduction of enemy follow-on forces into the engagement. For example, offensive information operations directed against the enemy's C<sup>2</sup> nodes and air defense assets increases the enemy's vulnerability to other shaping operations while simultaneously slowing the enemy's reaction to these shaping operations. Follow-on engagements focus on degrading the enemy's fire support and engineer assets, thereby disrupting the movement of his approaching columns.

**10-73.** Other targets for shaping operations include enemy reconnaissance and intelligence assets. The destruction of these assets allows the commander to repeatedly force enemy units to deploy into combat formations on ground of his choosing, thus contributing

uting to the disruption and desynchronization of the enemy's plan. The commander may also execute offensive operations to further disrupt the enemy, such as spoiling attacks, raids, ambushes, feints, or demonstrations. Earlier chapters of this manual discuss these offensive operations. Field Manual 100-6, *Information Operations*, details the composition and conduct of offensive information operations.

## **FIX THE ENEMY**

**10-74.** The commander does everything in his power to limit the options available to the enemy when conducting an area defense. In addition to disrupting the enemy, the commander also conducts shaping operations to constrain the enemy into a specific course of action or fix him in a given location. Both events limit the enemy's options. Constraining an enemy into a given course of action and controlling his battlefield movements combine to limit his options. While conducting these operations, the commander continues to find and delay or attrit enemy follow-on and reserve forces to prevent them from entering the engagement.

**10-75.** The commander has several options to help him fix an attacking force. The commander can design his shaping actions — such as holding the shoulders and nose of a penetration — to fix the enemy. Previously discussed in Chapter 8, combat outposts and strongpoints can also deny enemy movement to or through a given location. A properly executed military deception operation can constrain the enemy to a given course of action.

**10-76.** The commander uses obstacles covered by fire to fix, turn, block, disrupt, and thus help to limit the options available to the enemy. Properly executed obstacles are a result of the synthesis of top-down and bottom-up obstacle planning and emplacement. Blocking forces can also affect enemy movement. A blocking force may achieve its mission from a variety of positions depending on the factors of METT-TC.

## **MANEUVER**

**10-77.** In an area defense decisive operations occur in the MBA. This is where the effects of shaping operations, coupled with the sustaining effort, combine with the decisive operations of the MBA force to defeat the enemy. The commander's goal is to prevent the enemy's further advance through a combination of fires from prepared positions, obstacles, and mobile reserves.

**10-78.** Generating massed effects is especially critical to the commander conducting the defense of a large area against an enemy with a significant advantage in combat power. The attacker has the ability to select the point and time of the attack. Therefore,

the attacking enemy can mass his forces at a specific point, thus dramatically influencing the ratio of forces at the point of attack. An enemy three-to-one advantage in overall combat power can easily turn into a local six-to-one or higher ratio. The defending commander must quickly determine the intent of the enemy commander and the effects of terrain. This allows his units and their weapon systems to use their agility and flexibility to generate the effects of combat power against the enemy at those points and restore a more favorable force ratio.

**10-79.** Forces in the MBA assume responsibility for the battle at the battle handover line (BHL). As the security force approaches the FEBA, it may be necessary to increase the intensity of fire support from the MBA to allow the security force to break contact. Both direct and indirect fire assets from MBA forces provide support to cover the withdrawal of the security force and to close passage lanes through obstacle complexes. The security force's withdrawal through the forward positions of the MBA must be carefully planned and coordinated. The commander must guard gaps in obstacles left for the withdrawal of the security force and make arrangements for closing them after the passage of the security force.

**10-80.** After the enemy reaches the MBA, he tries to find weak points and attempts to force a passage, possibly by a series of probing attacks. As the attack develops, defending units engage the enemy's lead forces. As the battle progresses, the enemy advance may slow down because of canalization and bunching, thus presenting good targets for defensive fire and air support. The maximum weight of fire must be brought to bear at this stage of the battle.

**10-81.** The commander's subordinate elements conduct decisive operations using massed direct and indirect fire and movement to gain positional advantage over the assaulting enemy force. The commander also directs the engineer obstacle and sustainment effort by his assignment of priorities. The commander must reposition his forces to meet the enemy where he is rather than where the commander would like him to be. The commander directs operations and supports his subordinate elements by providing the necessary CS and CSS. He controls the commitment of the reserve and, at division echelon and above, engages enemy follow-on forces. If enemy follow-on forces can be delayed, the enemy's attack may be defeated in detail, one echelon at a time. If the defending unit can force the enemy to commit follow-on forces sooner than planned, the enemy's timetable can be disrupted, which can lead to the creation of exploitable gaps between the committed and subsequent echelons.

**10-82.** Gaps between defensive positions may be necessary, but they must not be left where the probable main enemy thrust is expected. They must be kept under surveillance, covered by fire or, where possible, blocked by barriers or repositioned friendly forces. The commander must clearly define the responsibility for dealing with each enemy penetration. If the enemy succeeds in penetrating the MBA, the commander must block the penetration immediately and destroy this enemy force as soon as possible; hence, the need for a mobile reserve. The commander may extend his actions within the depth of his AO to counter enemy penetrations that cannot be stopped further forward.

**10-83.** The commander never allows the attacking enemy to consolidate unless it fits his scheme of maneuver. Even if the enemy makes temporary gains, the defending force immediately counterattacks his penetration. The commander conducts this counterattack using all available local resources to prevent the enemy from consolidating his gains. The lowest possible echelon conducts this local counterattack; however, the commander must be aware of the problem of piecemeal commitment. A unit does not abandon a position unless it fits within its higher commander's intent or he grants permission to do so. If the defending force is unable to repulse the enemy, it tries to contain the enemy penetration until it can attack in concert with major counterattacking forces. The commander coordinates his counterattacks with the efforts of his fire support system.

**10-84.** Although the commander plans for the counterattack in his defensive planning, he is aware that his plan may not correspond exactly with the existing situation when the counterattack is launched. As the situation develops, the commander reassesses his plan based on new intelligence and combat information to answer the following basic questions:

- Is a counterattack feasible, or should the commander use the reserve to contain enemy successes?
- When and where should the defending forces counterattack?
- In the event of enemy penetrations, what should the defending forces counterattack and what should they block or contain?
- Is the window of opportunity large enough to complete the counterattack prior to the arrival of enemy follow-on forces in the counterattack area?
- Can the commander conduct a counterattack using his fire support systems?

**10-85.** When counterattacking, the commander employs all available resources necessary to ensure success. The reserve usually becomes the echelon's decisive operation upon its commitment, so he avoids their premature or piecemeal commitment. One of the commander's most critical decisions is the commitment of the reserve. He may re-

inforce his reserve force before committing it to give it greater capability to counter enemy action. The commander does not counterattack as an automatic reaction to a threat penetration, nor does he commit the reserve solely because the enemy has reached a certain phase line or other location. Fire support assets could destroy, disrupt, or attrit enemy penetrations, thus relieving the commander of the need to commit his reserve. When possible, the commander launches the counterattack when the enemy presents his flank or rear, overextends himself, or his momentum dissipates. Once the flanks of the enemy's decisive operations are identified, the commander can target counterattacks to isolate and destroy enemy forces within the MBA.

**10-86.** In some situations the commander may determine that he cannot afford to use his reserve to counterattack. Therefore, he must use all his resources to block, contain, or delay the enemy to gain time for the employment of higher-echelon reserves. In these cases, the commander and his staff must plan how to integrate reinforcing companies and battalions into the defensive scheme, adjust boundaries, and place BPs. The commander must plan the routes these units will use, and what adjustments will be necessary in existing C<sup>2</sup> arrangements. He can speed the process of positioning and moving reinforcements or the reserve by designating routes and providing traffic-control personnel and guides at contact points to lead and brief them on the situation. Scouts, MPs, and divisional cavalry units can provide traffic control.

## FOLLOW THROUGH

**10-87.** The ultimate goal of all defensive actions is to cause the enemy to sustain unacceptable losses short of his decisive objectives. If the area defense is successful, the commander will accomplish his mission of retaining terrain. The defense could result in an opportunity to counterattack. It could also result in a stalemate with both forces left in contact with each other. Finally, it could result in the defender being overcome by the enemy attack and needing to transition to a retrograde operation. Any decision to withdraw must take into account the current situation in adjacent defensive areas. Only the commander who ordered the defense can designate a new FEBA or authorize a retrograde operation.

**10-88.** During this follow-through period, time is critical. Unless the commander has a large, uncommitted reserve prepared to quickly exploit or reverse the situation, he must reset his defense as well as maintain contact with the enemy. Time is also critical to the enemy, because he will use it to reorganize, establish a security area, and fortify his positions.

**10-89.** There is a difference between local counterattacks designed to restore the defense and a decisive operation designed to wrest the initiative from the enemy and then defeat him. To conduct a decisive counterattack, the defending force must bring the enemy attack to or past its culminating point before it results in an unacceptable level of degradation to the defending force. To do this, the defending force must disrupt the enemy's ability to mass, causing him to disperse his combat power into small groups or attrit his forces to gain a favorable combat power ratio. The defending force must continue to disrupt the enemy's ability to introduce follow-on forces and to destroy his sustainment system. In the defense, the commander must prepare to quickly take advantage of fleeting opportunities, seize the initiative, and assume the offense. Ideally, he already has a counterattack plan appropriate to the existing situation. He must rapidly reorganize and refit selected units, move them to attack positions, and attack. Alternatively, he must conduct an attack using those units already in contact with the enemy, which is normally the least favorable course of action.

**10-90.** It is extremely difficult for the enemy to fight a defensive battle in response to a friendly counterattack after he reaches a culminating point for the following reasons:

- His defensive preparations are hasty.
- His forces are not adequately organized for defense.
- Reorganizing for a defense requires more time than the friendly commander should allow.
- The attacking enemy forces are dispersed, extended in depth, and weakened in condition.
- Enemy attacks rarely culminate on ground ideally suited for defense.

**10-91.** The shift to defense requires enemy soldiers to make a psychological adjustment. Soldiers who have become accustomed to advancing, and thus winning, must now halt deep in the opposing force's territory and fight defensively, sometimes desperately, on new and often unfavorable terms. If the enemy commander decides to conduct retrograde operations to more defensible ground, his soldiers find it even harder to adjust psychologically.

**10-92.** If the defensive battle leads to a stalemate with both forces left in contact with each other, the defending force must seek to retain the initiative and set the conditions for the next encounter. The commander must prepare the defending unit to move rapidly to a subsequent defensive position during a lull in the battle because it is risky to defend from the same position twice. Unless the defending force moves, its units are in positions known to the enemy and are subject to the enemy's supporting fires. Nevertheless, it is risky for a unit to move out of its prepared positions while still under enemy

pressure. This move would require the unit to suppress the enemy's approaching forces or take other actions to distract the enemy. Without the existence of either condition, the defending unit should normally stay in place and continue to fight.

**10-93.** If the defending unit is unable to maintain the integrity of its defense, it must transition to a retrograde operation or risk destruction. The commander must analyze how to execute this transition and prepare contingency plans. If the situation changes and requires a retrograde movement, the commander conducts the operation according to the retrograde fundamentals and principals addressed in Chapter 11. In the retrograde, if the defending force can trade space for time in the retrograde without sustaining unacceptable losses, the commander can usually reestablish the conditions required for a successful defense.



*"A swift and vigorous transition to attack — the flashing sword of vengeance — is the most brilliant point of the defensive."*

Clauswitz, *On War*, 1832

## CHAPTER 11

# THE MOBILE DEFENSE

**The mobile defense is a type of defensive action that concentrates on the destruction or defeat of the enemy through a decisive attack by a striking force.** It

focuses on destroying the attacking force by permitting the enemy to advance into a position that exposes him to counterattack and envelopment. The commander holds the majority of his available combat power in a striking force for his decisive operation, a major counterattack. He commits the minimum possible combat power to his fixing force that conducts shaping operations to control the depth and breadth of the enemy's advance. The fixing force also assures the retention of the terrain required to conduct the striking force's decisive counterattack. The area defense, on the other hand, focuses on retaining terrain by absorbing the enemy into an interlocked series of positions from which he can be destroyed largely by fires.

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**11-2.** The factors of METT-TC may dictate that a unit conducts a mobile defense when defending against an enemy force with greater combat power but less mobility. A commander may also employ a mobile defense when defending a large area of operations without well-defined avenues of approach, such as flat, open terrain. The mobile defense is preferred in an environment where the enemy may employ weapons of mass destruction because this type of defense reduces the force's vulnerability to attack and preserves its freedom of action. Future technology associated with command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) should improve the ability of the friendly force to gain and maintain a common operational picture, which reduces the risk associated with this type of defense. Among these risks are:

- The fixing force may be isolated and defeated in detail because of the need to resource the striking force to the detriment of the fixing force.
- Noncontiguous operations associated with the conduct of a mobile defense can lead to defeat in detail.

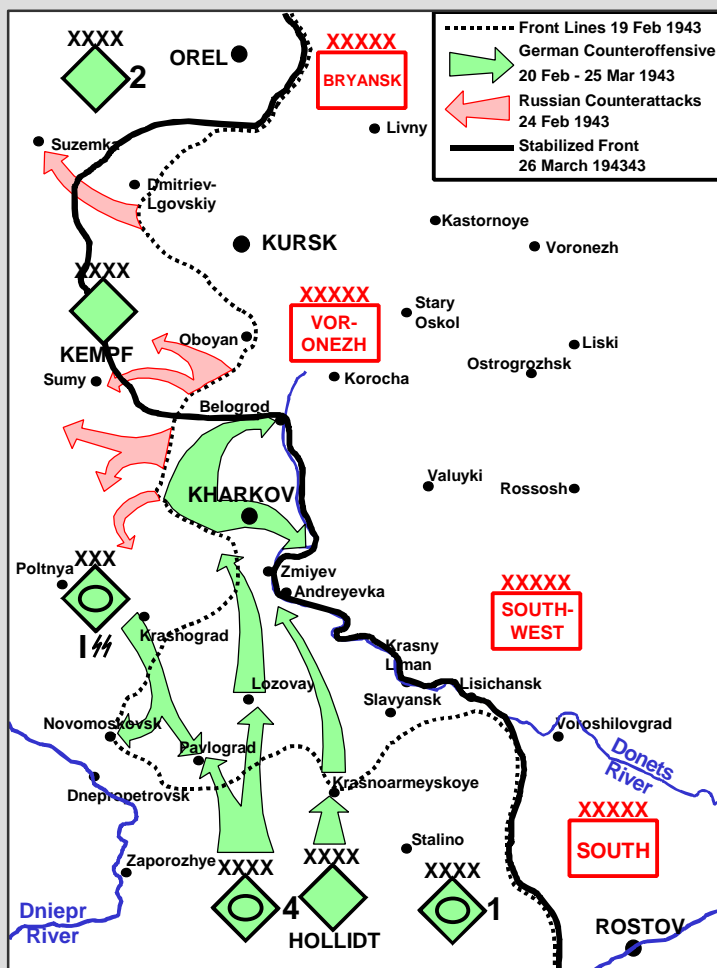
- Enemy operations may impair the striking force's ability to react at critical points.
- The enemy may not move into the area desired by the defending commander.
- The attacking enemy retains at least some momentum as he approaches the desired engagement areas.
- The defending force may not gain an accurate picture of the enemy's locations and dispositions required by the striking force to launch decisive operations.
- The decentralized operations required by the mobile defense increase the potential for fratricide.

## HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

### Manstein's Donbas Operation – February 1943

In January 1943, the Soviets launched a number of successful offensives following their Stalingrad counteroffensive. By the end of the month this culminated in plans to drive German forces back to the DNEIPR River. The Soviet High Command (STAVKA) approved plans to liberate simultaneously the Donets Basin Industrial Area, KHARKOV, and KURSK, and drive the Germans as far west as possible. The plan required that operations be continued without an operational pause, using forces weakened by previous operations, tenuously sustained by overextended supply lines, with virtually no operational reserve.

German Field Marshal Manstein's mission was to preserve the German southern wing in the Donets area. His defensive concept consisted of allowing Soviet forces to advance in some areas, holding tightly to a few critical positions, and deliberately reducing his own forces in other areas to create a striking force capable of mounting a coordinated counterattack. Reinforcements began arriving for his *Army Group Don*. He deployed his *1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Armee* to defend VOROSHILOVGRAD as a fixing force, *4<sup>th</sup> Panzer Armee* and *Army Detachment Hollidt* to defend the central and southern part of Manstein's lines, and the *1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Korps* to defend KHARKOV. The *1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Korps* consisting of the *1<sup>st</sup> (Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler)*, *2<sup>nd</sup> (Das Reich)*, and *3<sup>rd</sup> (Totenkopf) SS Panzer Divisions* (PzDiv) formed his striking force.



STAVKA continued to pursue its offensive plans. However, the farther west the Soviet forces moved, the more overextended their supply lines became. On 20 February, Mainstein's plan went into action. The *2<sup>nd</sup> SS PzDiv* attacked from south of KRASNOGRAD and struck the Russian 6<sup>th</sup> Army and linked up with the *15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division* at NOVO MOSKOVSK, thereby severing communications between the Soviet 267<sup>th</sup> Rifle Division (RD) and the 106<sup>th</sup> Rifle Brigade and the rear. On 21 February, the German units consolidated their positions and prepared to advance on PAVLOGRAD. Meanwhile, *XL Panzer Corps* attacked the Southwestern Front's mobile group, ultimately routing it. Units of the *3<sup>rd</sup> SS PzDiv* moved into the KRASNOGRAD area to prepare for their advance on PAVLOGRAD. Despite this new situation, the Soviet front did not deviate from its offensive plans.

On 22 February, the *2<sup>nd</sup> SS PzDiv* drove through to PAVLOGRAD and cut off the 35<sup>th</sup> Guards RD's communications with its 6<sup>th</sup> Army headquarters. The *3<sup>rd</sup> SS PzDiv* advanced widening the breach between the Soviet 6<sup>th</sup> Army's main forces and the 267<sup>th</sup> RD. On 23 February, the *6<sup>th</sup>* and *17<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division*, previously the *4<sup>th</sup> Panzer Armee* (fixing force) reserve, began their offensive, smashing the 6<sup>th</sup> Army and 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Army and cutting the supply lines of and virtually encircling the 25<sup>th</sup> Tank Corps, which had been ordered to continue its advance. The *2<sup>nd</sup> SS PzDiv* consolidated its positions at PAVLOGRAD. The *3<sup>rd</sup> SS PzDiv* advanced against the 16<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Brigade and the 35<sup>th</sup> Guards RD. Its southern column reached positions just northeast of PAVLOGRAD. The *6<sup>th</sup>* and *17<sup>th</sup> Panzer Divisions* advanced northward from the southeast, both divisions ultimately linking up with the *I SS Panzer Corps* to advance further north on 24 February.

By the evening of 24 February, Vatutin, the Soviet Southwest Front commander, finally recognized the dangerous situation his forces were facing and ordered what remained of the front's right flank to go over to the defensive. The Germans continued their counteroffensive and ultimately recaptured KHARKOV on 14 March.

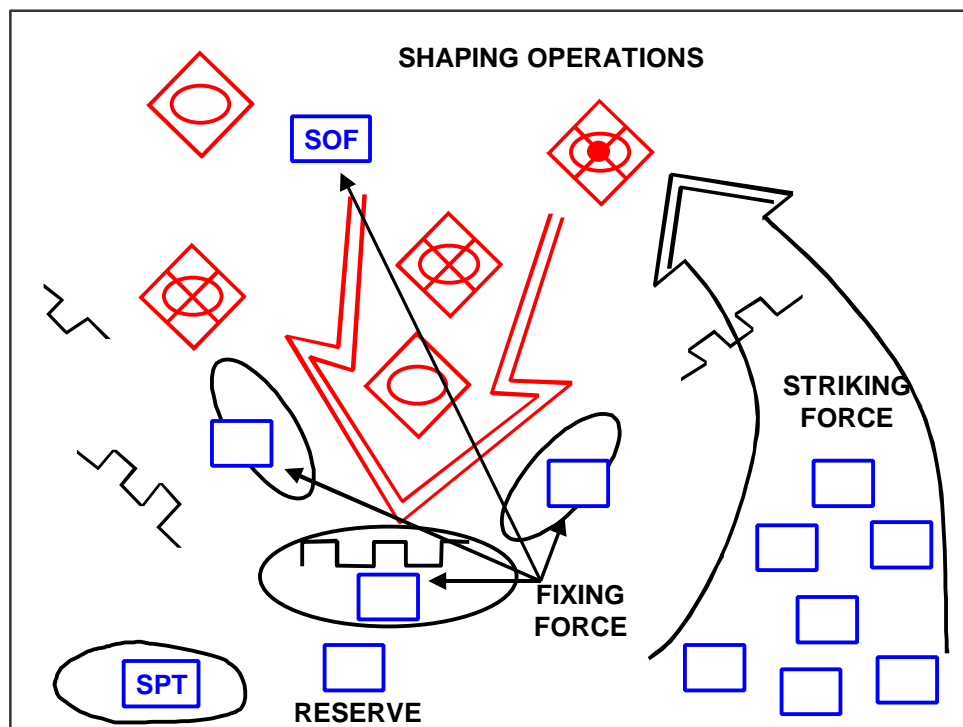


Figure 11-1. Mobile Defense

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**11-3.** Units smaller than a corps do not normally conduct a mobile defense because of their inability to fight multiple engagements throughout the width, depth, and height of the area of operations, while simultaneously resourcing striking, fixing, and reserve forces. Typically, the striking force in a mobile defense may consist of one-half to two-thirds of the defender's combat power. (See Figure 11-1.) Division and smaller units generally conduct an area defense or a delay as part of the fixing force as the commander shapes the enemy's penetration or they attack as part of the striking force. Alternatively, they can constitute a portion of the reserve.

**11-4.** The commander organizes his main body into two principal groups : the fixing force and the striking force. In the mobile defense, reconnaissance and security, reserve, and sustaining forces accomplish the same tasks as in an area defense. (See Figure 11-2.) The commander completes any required adjustments in task organization before he commits his units to the fight.

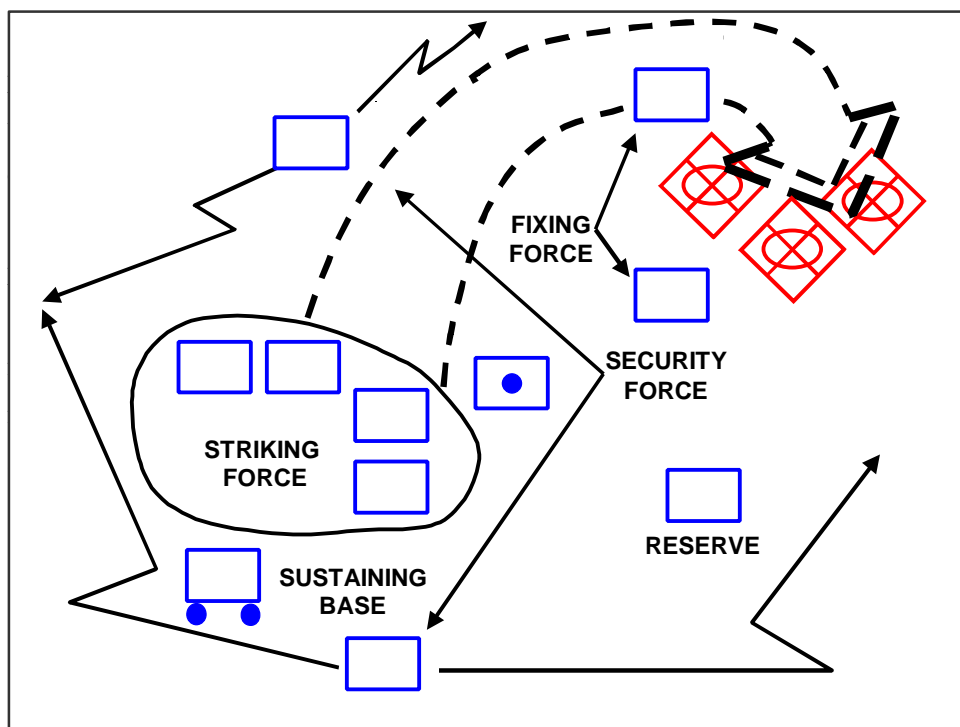


Figure 11-2. Organization of Forces for a Mobile Defense

**11-6.** The *striking force* decisively engages the enemy as he becomes exposed in his attempts to overcome the fixing force. The term *striking force* is used rather than reserve because the term *reserve* indicates an uncommitted force. The striking force is a committed force and has the resources to conduct a decisive counterattack as part of the mobile defense. Once committed, it is the commander's decisive operation.

**11-7.** The striking force contains the maximum combat power available to the commander at the time of its counterattack. This often consists of between one-half and two-thirds of the total combat power of the defending force. The striking force consists of a combined arms force that has greater combat power and mobility than the force it seeks to defeat or destroy. The commander considers the effects of surprise when determining the relative combat power of the striking force and its targeted enemy unit. The striking force is normally fully task-organized with all CS and CSS assets prior to its actual commitment. The commander positions engineer mobility-enhancing assets with the lead elements of the striking force.

**11-8.** The striking force is the key to a successful mobile defense. All of its contingencies relate to its attack. If the opportunity does not exist to decisively commit the striking force, the defender repositions his forces to establish the conditions for success. The striking force must have mobility equal to or greater than that of its targeted enemy unit. It can obtain this mobility through proper task organization, countermobility operations to slow and disrupt enemy movements, and mobility operations to facilitate the rapid shifting of friendly formations. The striking force requires access to multiple routes because the enemy goes to great lengths to deny the force freedom of action.

**11-9.** The commander responsible for orchestrating the overall mobile defense should retain control of the striking force unless communication difficulties make this impossible. Normally this is the overall defending force commander. The commander's most critical decisions are when, where, and under what conditions he should commit his striking force.

**11-10.** The *reserve* generally operates in support of the fixing force. However, if the reserve is available to the striking force, it exploits the striking force's success. If the reserve is composed of aviation forces, it may have contingencies to support both the fixing and the striking force.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**11-11.** A commander conducting a mobile defense uses control measures to synchronize the conduct of the operation. These control measures include designating the areas

[illegible]

**Figure 11-3. Mobile Defense Control Measures**

**11-12.** The commander must provide the striking force commander with control measures to focus his force at the decisive time and place and to deconflict fires with the fixing force. As a minimum, the striking force commander needs to know the anticipated objective decision points that could lead to the commitment of his force, limit of advance, and boundaries of his area of operations (AO). If the overall commander imposes either an axis of attack or a direction of attack as a control measure, he restricts the striking force commander's freedom of maneuver. However, such restrictions may

be necessary to avoid contact with enemy forces that could distract the striking force from accomplishing its primary mission. These control measures may have to be drawn “on the fly” while the commander, his staff, and his subordinates move to take advantage of an opportunity to commit the strike force in a decisive counterattack. They should also help the commander recover the integrity of his defense if the striking force is not successful in its attack. (These control measures are explained in Chapters 3, 6, and 9.)

## **PLANNING FOR THE MOBILE DEFENSE**

**11-13.** The key to successful mobile defensive operations is the integration and synchronization of all available assets to maximize the combat power of the defending unit. The commander achieves that integration and synchronization when he can employ their combined effects at decisive times and places. (The general defensive planning considerations addressed in Chapter 9 apply to the conduct of a mobile defense.)

## **DEPLOY/CONDUCT MANEUVER**

**11-14.** The commander's ability to maintain the mobility advantage of his forces is an important aspect of the mobile defense. This mobility advantage may result or be enhanced by countermobility actions directed against the enemy force. In his mobile defense plan, the commander ensures that his forces, such as reserves or the striking force, can move freely around the battlefield, while at the same time restricting the enemy's mobility, slowing his momentum, and guiding or forcing him into areas that favor the friendly defensive effort.

## **EMPLOY FIREPOWER**

**11-15.** The effectiveness of a mobile defense is based to a large extent on the carefully planned fires of all weapons. Upon its commitment, the striking force is the decisive operation in a mobile defense and requires continuous and concentrated fire support during the conduct of the counterattack. The commander weights his decisive operation, in part, by allocating to it field artillery and other fire support weapon systems. The commander must rapidly shift indirect fire support from the fixing force to the striking force. These fire support systems do not have to move with the striking force if it remains within supporting range.

**11-16.** If the striking force's planned maneuver places it outside the supporting range of the defending commander's fire support systems, he must either plan the movement of fire support assets to locations from which they can support the striking force or incorporate them into the striking force. Fire support assets can partially compensate for a

lack of maneuver forces in the striking force. The commander takes precautions to prevent fratricide as the striking force approaches the fixing force's engagement areas, while supporting air and artillery assets try to interdict enemy movements.

#### **PERFORM LOGISTICS AND CSS**

**11-17.** When planning for the mobile defense's sustainment operations, logistics operations planners must look beyond the fixing force's shaping operations to prepare to support the striking force's decisive counterattack. The greater the distance the striking force must cover when moving from its assembly area to its final objective, the greater the amount of supplies needed to support that move. Once committed, units in the striking force require priority of fuel, ammunition, and maintenance support over comparable units in the fixing force. When the striking force must move a considerable distance from its sustaining base, the commander should consider establishing an intermediate support base (ISB). Before establishing an ISB, the commander must weigh the benefits of establishing the base against the cost in terms of combat power or effort diverted from the support mission to secure the ISB.

#### **PROTECT THE FORCE**

**11-18.** Situational obstacles provide the commander a tremendous advantage in the mobile defense. These obstacles are a combat multiplier because they enable the commander to use economy of force measures. Some uses of situational obstacles are: exploit enemy vulnerabilities, exploit success, separate follow-on forces, and provide flank protection.

**11-19.** In the mobile defense, air defense is normally initially used to cover:

- Security forces and fixing force units in forward areas.
- C<sup>2</sup> facilities.
- Sustainment resources.
- Critical assets, including fire support systems, reserves, and the striking force.
- Choke points along movement corridors planned for use by reserves or the strike force.

Once the commander commits the striking force, it receives priority of support as the decisive operation. If the striking force attacks to extended depths, the commander ensures that it and other critical assets remain within the coverage of available air defense systems. This may require the commander to reposition air defense radars and systems to maintain air defense coverage of the defending force.



## PREPARATION FOR A MOBILE DEFENSE

**11-20.** Preparations for conducting a mobile defense include the fixing force's development of defensive positions and engagement areas as discussed in Chapter 9. The commander aggressively uses his reconnaissance assets to track enemy units as they approach. Engineers participate in the conduct of route and area reconnaissance to find and classify existing routes. They improve existing routes and open new routes for use during the battle.

**11-21.** The striking force assembles in one or more areas depending on the width of the area of operations, the terrain, enemy capabilities, and the planned manner of employment. Before the enemy attack begins, the striking force may deploy all or some of its elements forward in the MBA to:

- Deceive the enemy regarding the force's purposes.
- Occupy dummy battle positions.
- Create a false impression of unit boundaries, which is especially important when operating with a mix of heavy and light forces or multinational forces.
- Conduct reconnaissance of routes between the striking force's assembly areas and potential engagement areas.

**11-22.** The enemy will attempt to discover the strength, composition, and location of the units that constitute the fixing force and the striking force. The commander uses security forces and information operations to deny the enemy this information and degrade enemy RISTA. In addition, his plans and preparations must incorporate defensive information operations to counter the enemy's attempts to obtain this information. The commander normally tries to portray an area defense while hiding the existence and location of the striking force.

## EXECUTION OF A MOBILE DEFENSE

**11-23.** The commander must have the flexibility to yield terrain and shape the enemy penetration. He employs various techniques to shape the penetration. He may even entice the enemy by appearing to uncover an objective of strategic or operational value to the enemy. Once the enemy's leading elements become separated because of the efforts of the commander's shaping operations, the striking force conducts its decisive attack.

**11-24.** Executing a mobile defense tends to occur in five phases. The length and nature of each phase, if it occurs at all, varies from situation to situation according to the factors of METT-TC. The phases of defensive operations are gain and maintain enemy contact, disrupt the enemy, fix the enemy, maneuver, and follow through.

## **GAIN AND MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**11-25.** The commander conducting a mobile defense focuses on discovering the exact location of the enemy and his strength to facilitate the effectiveness of the striking force. The security force (guard or cover) or the fixing force confirms the enemy's course of action and main avenues of approach. The commander normally tasks other reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence (RSI) assets to determine the location of enemy reserves and follow-on forces. Early detection of the enemy's decisive operation provides the commander with reaction time to adjust the fixing force's positions and shape the enemy penetration, which, in turn, provides the time necessary to commit the striking force. The striking force commander requires as close to real-time updates of the enemy situation as are possible to ensure that the striking force engages the enemy at the right location and time.

**11-26.** While conducting operations, the security force determines what routes the enemy is using, where the enemy is strong or weak, and where gaps in and between enemy formations exist. This information aids the commander in his attempt to seize the initiative. That information also increases the striking force's agility by identifying opportunities. It helps to pull the striking force along the path of least resistance as it maneuvers to employ its combat power at the critical time and place.

## **DISRUPT THE ENEMY**

**11-27.** In a mobile defense, the commander conducts shaping operations designed to shape the enemy's penetration into the MBA and disrupt the enemy's introduction of fresh forces into the fight. These shaping operations help establish the preconditions for committing the striking force by isolating the object of the striking force and destroying the enemy's key  $C^2$  nodes, logistics resupply units, and reserves. Whenever possible, the commander sequences these shaping operations, to include offensive information operations, so that the impact of their effects coincides with the commitment of the striking force. The intensity of these shaping operations may increase dramatically upon the commitment of the striking force to generate a tempo that temporarily paralyzes enemy  $C^2$ . The commander continues to conduct shaping operations once the striking force commits to prevent enemy forces from outside the objective area from interfering with executing the decisive counterattack.

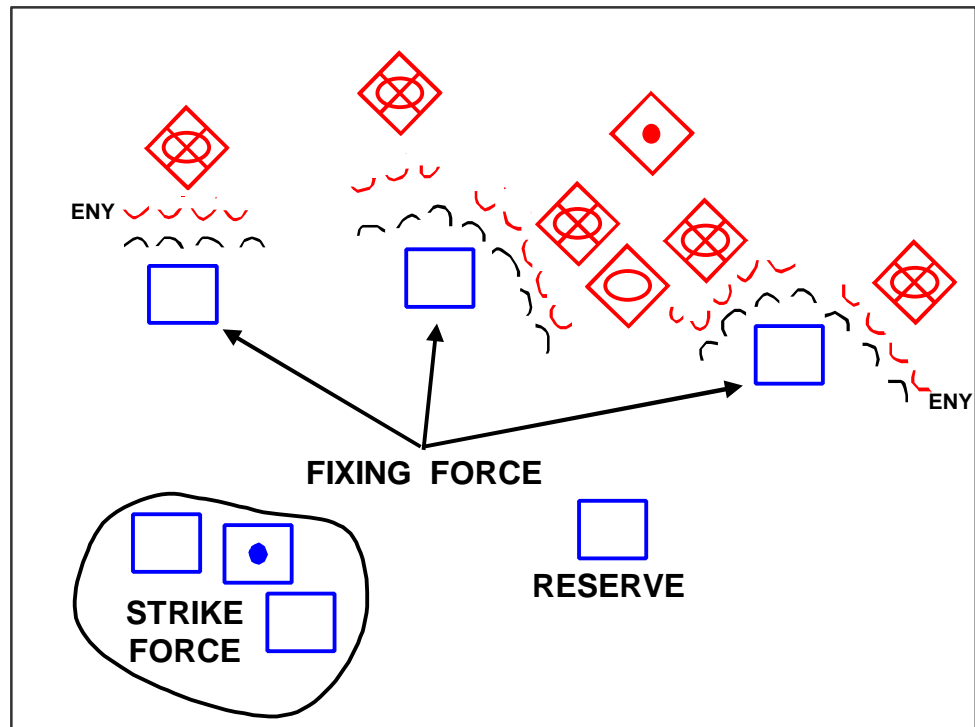


Figure 11-4. A Mobile Defense Before the Commitment of the Strike Force

#### FIX THE ENEMY

**11-28.** Fixing the enemy is the second half of shaping operations and results in establishing the conditions necessary for decisive operations by the striking force. Typically, the commander of the defending force allows the enemy force to penetrate into the defensive AO before the striking force attacks. (See Figure 11-4.) The fixing force employs a combination of area defense, delay, and strongpoint defensive techniques to shape the enemy penetration. The intent of the fixing force is not necessarily to defeat the enemy but to shape the penetration to facilitate a decisive counterattack by the striking force. The commander ensures that the missions and task organization of subordinate units within the fixing force are consistent with his concept for shaping the penetration. Defensive positions within the fixing force may not be contiguous since the fixing force contains only the minimum-essential combat power to accomplish its mission.

**11-29.** The fixing force's extensive use of obstacles supports this shaping effort and also helps to gain an overall mobility advantage over the enemy. The commander may want to yield ground quickly to deceive the enemy by making him think he has been successful or to entice him to a location where the striking force can attack him. No r-

mally in a mobile defense, ground is retained only to facilitate the commitment of the striking force.

**11-30.** When conducting a mobile defense, the commander may need to commit his reserve to reinforce the fixing force and to help shape the battlefield. He positions his reserve so it effectively reacts to the most likely contingency and the enemy's most dangerous course of action. Without a reserve, the commander assumes significant risk in attempting to shape the enemy penetration.

## MANEUVER

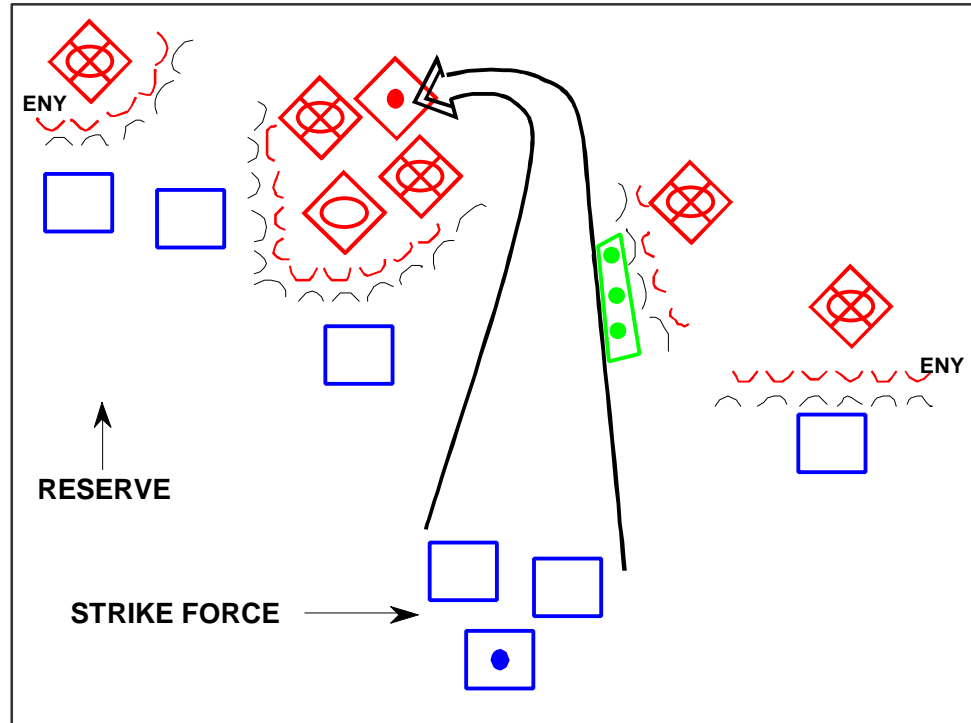
**11-31.** The commander's situational understanding is critical in establishing the conditions that initiate the striking force's movement and in determining the general area that serves as a focus for the counterattack. Situational understanding includes identifying those points in time and space where the counterattack can prove to be decisive. He usually establishes a force-oriented objective or an engagement area to indicate these locations. The staff synchronizes the unit's activities in time and space to sufficiently mass the effects of the striking force at the right time and place.

**11-32.** The actions of the striking force become the echelon's decisive operation upon its commitment. The entire focus of the commander's reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence systems is to track the enemy's advance. The striking force commander continuously receives intelligence and combat information updates that allow him to adjust his counterattack as necessary to defeat the targeted enemy force. Once the enemy starts his attack, any forward-deployed elements of the striking force withdraw to assembly areas or attack positions and prepare for their commitment in the counterattack.

**11-33.** The defending commander launches his strike force in a counterattack when its offensive power, relative to that of the targeted attacking enemy element, is the greatest. (See Figure 11-5.) Piecemeal commitment of the striking force in support of local objectives jeopardizes the success of the overall operation. The strike force must execute the counterattack rapidly and violently, employing all combat power necessary to ensure success. The strike force may be committed at a time different than anticipated and in an entirely different area than previous contingency plans envisioned. Therefore, it must be able to respond to unexpected developments rapidly and decisively.

**11-34.** Because the strike force normally attacks a moving enemy force, it initially conducts a movement to contact in a formation that possibly consists of a covering force, an advance guard, a main body, and either a follow and support or a follow and assume

force. The strike force attempts to take advantage of obstacles, such as rivers or obstacle zones, that block the enemy's movement. The commander designates flank responses i-



**Figure 11-5. A Mobile Defense After the Commitment of the Strike Force**

bilities and may even allocate a designated force against a particularly vulnerable flank. However, the striking force moves quickly and takes risk on its flanks, using its speed of movement and superior situational understanding to provide some security.

**11-35.** During the counterattack, it is generally more advantageous for one element of the striking force to occupy support-by-fire positions to suppress the enemy, while another striking force element prepares to assault the objective. Either heavy or light forces may make this assault. In mounted assaults, mechanized infantry remain mounted in their infantry fighting vehicles throughout much of the assault or tanks assault without accompanying infantry. Assaults conducted on foot reduce the tempo of the operation but provide a greater degree of security. (Chapter 6 discusses the actual conduct of an assault on an objective.)

**11-36.** Engineers should be well forward to enhance the mobility of the striking force. These lead engineers search for existing obstacles and clear the route as much as possible within their capabilities. Follow-on engineers expand breaches, improve routes, and

replace assault bridges with more permanent structures. Engineers with flank units focus on countermobility to protect the flanks.

#### **FOLLOW THROUGH**

**11-37.** The ultimate goal of all defensive operations is to create the opportunity to transition to the offense. In a mobile defense, the transition to the offense generally follows the striking force's attack. If the employment of the striking force results in opportunities for future offensive action, the commander exploits his success and attempts to establish conditions for a pursuit. Exploitation and pursuit are discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. If the conduct of the mobile defense is unsuccessful and the enemy is left with the initiative, the commander must either reestablish a viable defense or conduct retrograde operations. Retrograde operations are the topic of Chapter 12.

*"The withdrawal should be thought of as an offensive instrument, and exercises framed to teach how the enemy can be lured into a trap, closed by a counter-stroke or a devastating circle of fire."*

**B.H. Liddell Hart, 1944**

## CHAPTER 12

# THE RETROGRADE

**The retrograde is a type of defensive action that involves organized movement away from the enemy.** The enemy may force these operations or a commander may execute them voluntarily. In either case the higher commander of the force executing the operation must approve the retrograde. Retrograde operations are transitional operations; they are not considered in isolation. The commander executes retrogrades to:

- Disengage from operations.
- Gain time without fighting a decisive engagement.
- Resist, exhaust, and damage an enemy in situations that do not favor a defense.
- Draw the enemy into an unfavorable situation or extend his lines of communication.
- Preserve the force or avoid combat under undesirable conditions, such as continuing an operation that no longer promises success.
- Reposition forces more favorably, shorten lines of communication, or conform to movements of other friendly troops.
- Position the force for use elsewhere in other missions.
- Simplify the logistical sustainment of the force.
- Position the force where it can safely conduct reconstitution operations.
- Adjust the defensive scheme, such as secure more favorable terrain.
- Deceive the enemy.
- Reduce the support distance from other friendly forces.

**12-2.** The three forms of the retrograde are: delay, withdrawal, and retirement. In each form, a force moves to the rear using combinations of combat formations and marches. (Chapter 4 discusses combat formations and Chapter 14 discusses troop movement.) The commander may use all three forms singly or in combination with other types and forms of actions as part of a larger scheme of maneuver to facilitate the conduct of offensive or defensive operations.

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**12-3.** Retrogrades can negatively affect the participating soldiers' attitude more than any other type of operation because they may view the retrograde as a defeat. A commander must not allow retrograde operations to reduce or destroy unit morale. Leaders must maintain unit aggressiveness. By planning and efficiently executing the retrograde and ensuring that soldiers understand the purpose and duration of the operation, the commander can counter any negative effects of the operation on unit morale. After completing a retrograde operation, the commander may reconstitute the force. Field Manual 100-9, *Reconstitution*, establishes the basic principles of reconstitution.

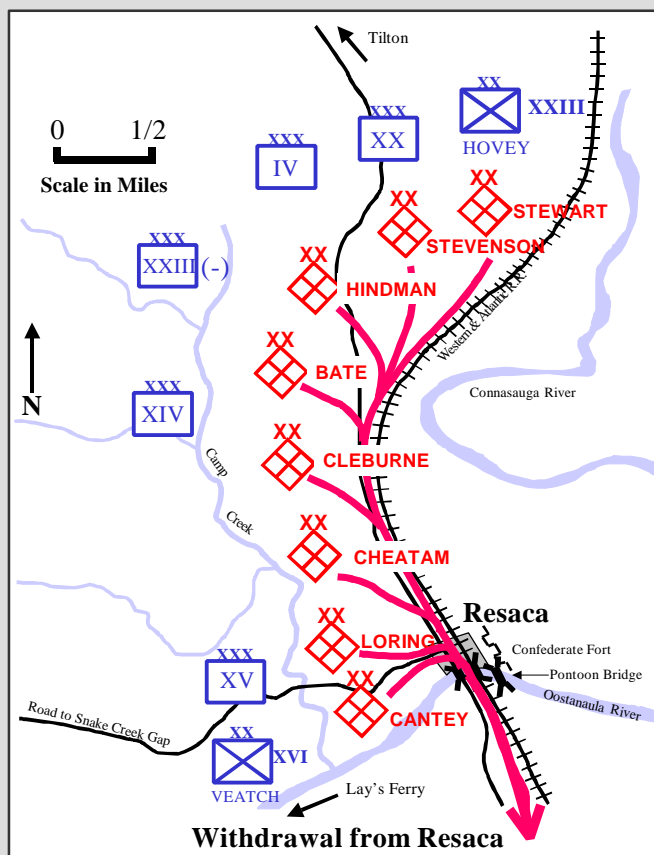
### HISTORICAL EXAMPLE: THE 1864 ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

The first two months of the Atlanta campaign illustrate the successful conduct of a delay in the face of superior forces. Between 5 May and 17 July, Johnston held Sherman to an average gain of one mile a day while preserving his freedom of maneuver and his army for future operations. This part of the campaign contains examples of successful delays, withdrawals, and retirements. Confederate actions at Resaca early in the campaign will be used to illustrate an unassisted withdrawal under enemy pressure.

In May 1864, Confederate GEN Joseph E. Johnston and his 55,000 man strong *Army of Tennessee* had the mission of defending Atlanta. Johnston faced 110,000 Union soldiers organized into seven corps under MG William T. Sherman's overall command. Johnston's campaign strategy was to force Sherman to culminate before reaching Atlanta, conserving his army's strength until he crippled the Union army in a defensive battle, and then launch a counteroffensive.

Union forces began the campaign on 5 May with an advance from positions south east of Chattanooga. Forced to withdraw from his initial positions at Dalton because of a turning movement around his left flank by two Union corps, Johnston raced to position his forces to defend Resaca, Georgia. Johnston intended to hold at Resaca until he could cross his entire force over the Oostanaula River to its southern bank. At Resaca were three bridges that supported the Confederate's line of communication with their logistics base at Atlanta.

Johnston positioned the three corps — then constituting his army — to defend Resaca as they arrived on 13 May. May 14th and 15th saw a series of attacks and counterattacks around Resaca with neither side





gaining a marked advantage, however, the right flank of the Union army moved within cannon range of the bridges. Forces that Sherman sent four miles to the southwest on another turning movement crossed the river on 15 May, although they did not breakout from their bridgehead on that day. Sherman intended to follow with his main force and either envelope Johnston or strike his flank during a retreat. Faced with these prospects, Johnston decided to withdraw across the river. A deceptive Confederate attack late on the 15th convinced Sherman that Johnston intended to stay in his current positions. The withdrawal commenced at midnight. Johnston left skirmishers along the line (Detachment Left in Contact [DLIC]), withdrawing forces in succession from his corps farthest from the bridges, then from his center corps, and finally from the corps closest to the bridges. One division from his right wing corps constituted the army's rear guard. After the rear guard crossed the bridges, Johnston's engineers commenced their destruction. During the three hours required to withdraw Johnston's army across the river, Union forces did not detect the withdrawal until the Confederates began to destroy the bridges.

Johnston's mix of retrograde and defensive operations preserved his army as a constant threat to Sherman. Nevertheless, his strategy was unacceptable to Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis replaced him on 17 July 1864 with GEN John B. Hood. Within two weeks, Hood lost three battles to Sherman. And, on 1 September, Sherman seized Atlanta, achieving the Union's strategic objective in the Western Theater before the national elections.

## DELAY

**12-4. A delay is an operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged.**

(Chapter 3 defines decisive engagement.) The delay is one of the most demanding of all ground combat operations. A delay wears down the enemy so that friendly forces can regain the initiative through offensive action, buy time to establish an effective defense, or determine enemy intentions as part of a security operation. Normally in a delay, inflicting casualties on the enemy is secondary to gaining time. For example, a flank security force conducts a delay operation to provide time for the protected force to establish a viable defense along its threatened flank. Except when directed to prevent enemy penetration of a phase line for a specific time period, a force conducting a delay normally does not become decisively engaged.

**12-5.** A delay operation can occur when the commander does not have enough friendly forces to attack or defend. It may also occur based on a unit's mission in conjunction with a higher commander's intent. The decision to conduct a delay may not be based on the unit's combat power, but by the other factors of METT-TC. For example, during security operations, the commander may conduct a delay as a shaping operation to draw the enemy into an area where he is vulnerable to a counterattack. Another example would be a delay instituted as an economy of force effort to allow the completion of offensive actions elsewhere.

**12-6.** The ability of a force to trade space for time requires depth within the area of operations (AO) assigned to the delaying force. The amount of depth required depends on several factors, including the:

- Amount of time to be gained.
- Relative combat power of friendly and enemy forces.
- Relative mobility of the forces.
- Nature of the terrain.
- Ability to shape the area of operations with obstacles and fires.
- Degree of acceptable risk.

Ordinarily, the greater the available depth, the lower the risk involved to the delaying force and the greater the chance for success.

**12-7.** A delay succeeds by forcing the enemy to repeatedly concentrate his forces to fight through defensive positions in depth. A delaying force must offer a continued threat of serious opposition, forcing the enemy to repeatedly deploy and maneuver. Delaying forces displace to subsequent positions before the enemy is able to concentrate sufficient resources to decisively engage and defeat delaying forces on their current position. The length of time a force can remain in a position without facing the danger of becoming decisively engaged is primarily a function of relative combat power, terrain, and weather.

## **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES**

**12-8.** The commander normally organizes the delaying force into a main body, a security force, and a reserve. The security force usually conducts a screen forward of the initial delay positions. For a divisional cavalry squadron or a corps cavalry regiment conducting a delay, the security force executing the screen mission may consist of scouts or air cavalry. For a brigade or battalion conducting a delay, the security force may consist of battalion scouts or another element tasked to conduct security operations.

**12-9.** The main body contains the majority of the delaying force's combat power. The main body may use alternate or subsequent position to conduct the delay. The commander usually deploys his main body as a complete unit into a forward position when conducting a delay from subsequent positions. He divides his main body into two parts, roughly equal in combat power, to occupy each set of positions when conducting a delay from alternate positions.

**12-10.** The commander normally retains a reserve to contain enemy penetrations between positions, to reinforce fires into an engagement area, or to help a unit disengage from the enemy. All of these missions require that the reserves have the mobility and

strength to strike with such force that an enemy has no option but to face the immediate threat.

**12-11.** The extended frontages and ranges common to retrograde operations make the provision of fire support difficult and act to limit the commander's ability to mass fires. As a result, retrograde forces, especially delay forces, often have more than the normal allocation of fire support assets. The commander's risk of losing both artillery systems and their ammunition also increases when he is supporting retrograde operations. Therefore, he must balance his decision to commit fire support systems forward against anticipated requirements in subsequent battle stages. In particular, he must protect his towed artillery systems from being overrun by a more mobile enemy.

**12-12.** Combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets are widely dispersed and often attached to the units they support because of the width of the AOs normally assigned in a delay. Priorities for engineers are normally countermobility first, then mobility. However, restrictive terrain that impedes friendly movement may require the commander to reverse the priorities. Close coordination is necessary so that engineer obstacles are covered by fire and do not impede the planned withdrawal routes of delaying forces or the commitment of a counterattacking reserve force. The delaying force should have a greater-than-normal allocation of fire support systems.

**12-13.** The requirement to maintain continuous support during the delay requires CSS organizations to echelon their assets. This echelonment, coupled with the wide dispersion of combat forces that is inherent in a delay, complicates the conduct of the delay.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**12-14.** The delay consists of a series of independent small-unit actions that occur simultaneously across the front. Subordinate commanders must have freedom of action. The tactical mission graphic for the delay is shown in Figure 12-1. Commanders and planners use tactical mission graphics in course-of-action sketches, synchronization matrixes, and maneuver sketches; they are not control measures.

**12-15.** The control measures used in the delay are the same as those introduced in Chapter 8. Common graphics used in a delay include areas of operations (AOs), phase lines (PLs), battle positions (BPs), coordination points, checkpoints, engagement areas, trigger lines, target reference points (TRPs), and disengagement lines. (See Figure 12-2.) The commander designates contact points in front of, between, and behind units to assist coordination, to ensure continuity of the delay, and to draw attention to enemy

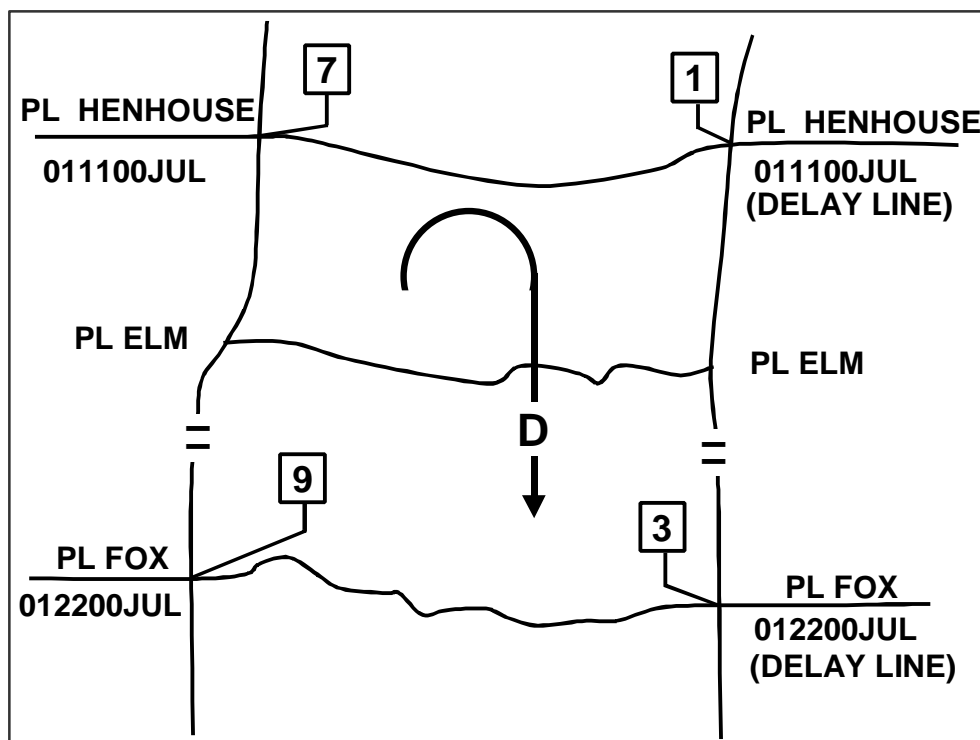


Figure 12-1. Delay Tactical Mission graphic

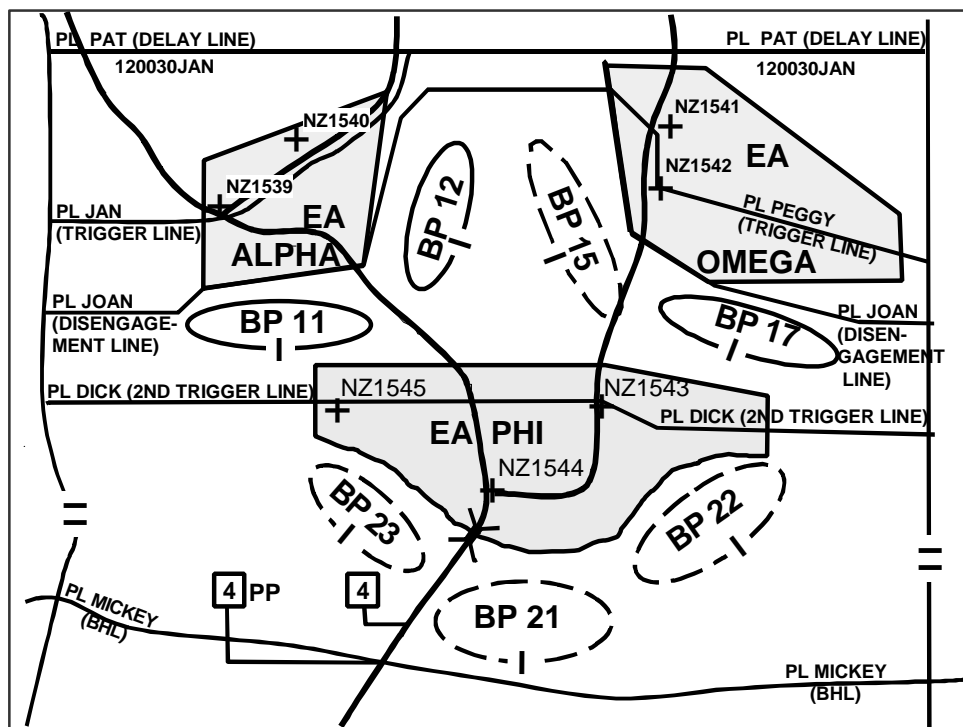


Figure 12-2. Example Control Measures for a Delay

**12-17.** The commander designates additional phase lines beyond those established by his higher commander as necessary to control movement during the delay. **A delay line is a phase line where the date and time before which the enemy is not allowed to cross the phase line is depicted as part of the graphic control measures for the mission.** Designating delay lines is a command decision that imposes a high degree of risk on the delaying unit. The delaying unit must do everything in its power — including accepting decisive engagement — to prevent the enemy from crossing that line before the time indicated. A delay line may also be event-driven. For example, a commander can order a delaying unit to prevent penetration of the delay line until his engineers complete construction of a rearward obstacle belt.

## PLAN

**12-18.** Unit commanders and soldiers must understand and exercise the basics of defensive operations outlined in Chapter 9 to conduct a successful delay. However, these defensive basics have unique considerations, and the significance of these considerations varies depending on the factors of METT-TC. In a delay, units operate on extended frontages at great risk from advancing enemy forces. The tactical situation constantly changes with maneuver opportunities existing for only extremely short periods. Subordinate commanders must have the flexibility to take immediate action to retain the integrity of their forces. This helps retain their freedom of maneuver and inflict maximum destruction on the enemy.

**12-19.** The commander identifies ground and air avenues for enemy attacks and counterattacks by friendly forces. When avenues of approach diverge or pass from one AO to another, adjacent units must coordinate with each other. Using the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process, the commander designates initial and subsequent delay positions on key terrain that covers likely enemy avenues of approach throughout the depth of the AO allocated to the delay mission.

**12-20.** Maintaining a mobility advantage over the attacker by the delaying force is key to the successful conduct of a delay. Robust engineering and fire support are critical to this effort. The commander plans to maintain this advantage by taking full advantage of the mobility inherent in the combat and tactical systems available to the delaying force. In addition, he takes other steps to enhance friendly mobility and degrade the enemy's mobility, such as building combat trails between delay positions and preparing bridges over major rivers for demolition. The delaying force should be capable of constructing large numbers of obstacles and delivering long-range fires. For example, while the e-

emy seeks to travel in movement formations that allow him to press his attack at the greatest speed, the delaying force's aim is to engage the enemy as early and often as possible. This forces the enemy out of those formations through a multiple series of time-consuming deployments into an assault formation.

**12-21.** Flanks and gaps between units are always areas of concern for a commander. In a linear deployment, the enemy can bypass or outflank the delaying force if coordination between adjacent units is weak, or if one unit creates a gap by moving rearward too rapidly. Therefore, the commander normally designates battle positions to guard approaches into his AO. Adjacent units of different commands must exchange liaison parties.

**12-22.** The commander should calculate enemy closure rates for the terrain and compare them to friendly displacement rates between positions. By comparing time and distance factors, the commander can calculate his movement window of time. By applying the enemy's probable rates of advance and formations to the avenues of approach, the commander can decide what obstacles to use and where to emplace them (covered by fires). It also helps the commander determine if and where decisive engagement is likely or required to achieve the delay objective. Careful consideration of the factors of METT-TC, especially terrain analysis, is an inherent part of delay planning.

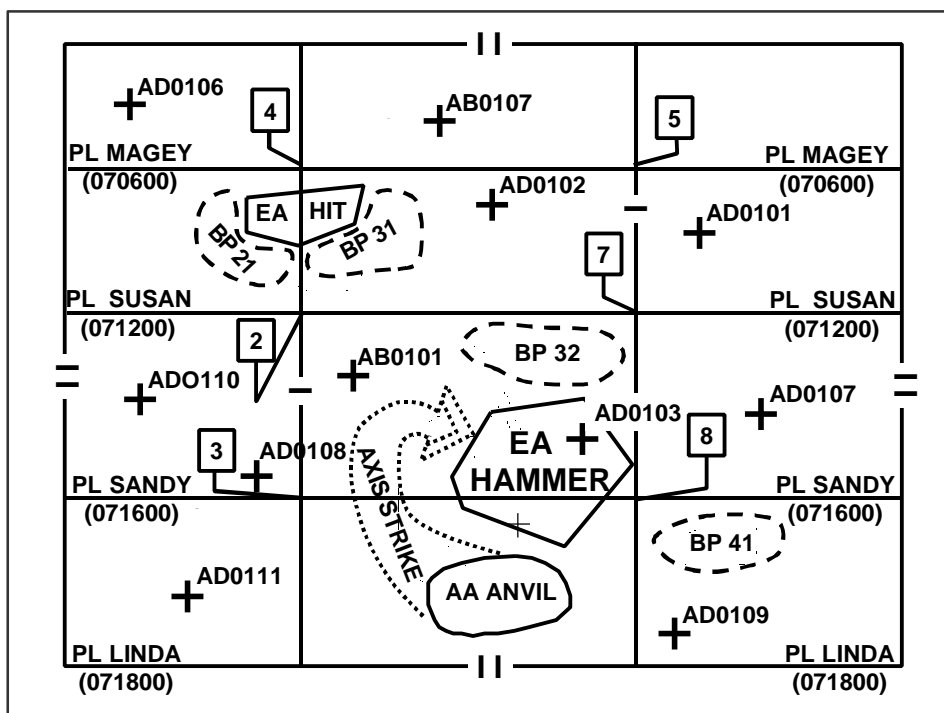


Figure 12-3. Delay Forward of a Specified Line for a Specified Time

### Parameters of the Delay Order

**12-23.** An order for a delay mission must specify certain parameters. First, it must direct one of two alternatives: delay within the AO or delay forward of a specified line or terrain feature for a specified time. That time is usually based on another unit completing its activities, such as establishing rearward defensive positions. A mission of delay within the AO implies that force integrity is a prime consideration. In this case, the delaying force delays the enemy as long as possible while avoiding decisive engagement. Generally, this force displaces once predetermined criteria have been met, such as when the enemy force reaches a disengagement line. The control measures are the same for both alternatives, except that during a delay forward of a specified line for a specified time, the commander annotates the phase line with the specified time. (See Figure 12-3.) If the commander establishes a delay line, mission accomplishment outweighs preservation of the force's integrity. It may require the force hold a given position until ordered to displace.

**12-24.** The second parameter is that the order must specify the acceptable risk. A acceptable risk ranges from accepting decisive engagement in an attempt to hold terrain for a given time to maintaining the delaying force's integrity. The depth of the AO available for the delay, the time needed by higher headquarters, and subsequent missions for the delaying force determine the amount of acceptable risk. A delay mission that does not specify times, control of key terrain, or other guidance and control measures implies a lower degree of risk.

**12-25.** Third, the order must specify whether the delaying force may use the entire AO or whether it must delay from specific battle positions. A delay using the entire AO is preferable, but a delay from specific positions may be required to coordinate two or more units in the delay. To enhance command and control and to coordinate the battle across a broad front, the commander assigns units down to platoon level specific battle positions. However, he may assign them missions to delay within their AO if that best supports the scheme of maneuver.

### Alternate and Subsequent Positions

**12-26.** The commander normally assigns his subordinate unit parallel AOs that are deeper than they are wide. He uses obstacles, fires, and movement throughout the depth of each assigned AO. He may be forced to fight from a single set of positions if the delay is only planned to last a short time or the AO's depth is limited. If the delay is ex-

pected to last for a longer period of time, or if sufficient depth is available, he may delay from either alternate or successive positions.

**12-27.** In both techniques, delaying forces normally reconnoiter subsequent positions before occupying them and, if possible, post guides on one or two subsequent positions. Additionally, in executing both techniques, it is critical that the delaying force maintains contact with the enemy between delay positions. The advantages and disadvantages of the two techniques are summarized in Table 12-1.

METHOD OF DELAY	USE WHEN...	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>Delay from Subsequent Positions.</b>	AO is wide.  Forces available do not allow themselves to be split.	Masses fires of all available combat elements.	Limited depth to the delay positions.  Less available time to prepare each position.  Less flexibility.
<b>Delay from Alternate Positions.</b>	AO is narrow.  Forces are adequate to be split between different positions.	Allows positioning in depth.  Allows more time for equipment and soldier maintenance.  Increases flexibility.	Requires continuous coordination.  Requires passage of lines.  Engages only part of the force at one time.

**Table 12-1. Advantages and disadvantage of delay techniques**

**12-28.** A commander normally prefers to use alternate positions when he has adequate forces and his AO has sufficient depth. In a delay from alternate positions, two or more units in a single AO occupy delaying positions in depth. (See Figure 12-4.) As the first unit engages the enemy, the second occupies the next position in depth and prepares to assume responsibility for the operation. The first force disengages and passes around or through the second force. It then moves to the next position and prepares to reengage the enemy while the second force takes up the fight. Alternate positions are normally used when the delaying force is operating on a narrow front. A delay from alternate positions is particularly useful on the most dangerous avenues of approach because it offers greater security than a delay from successive positions. However, it requires more forces and continuous maneuver coordination. Additionally, the delaying forces risk losing contact with the enemy between delay positions.



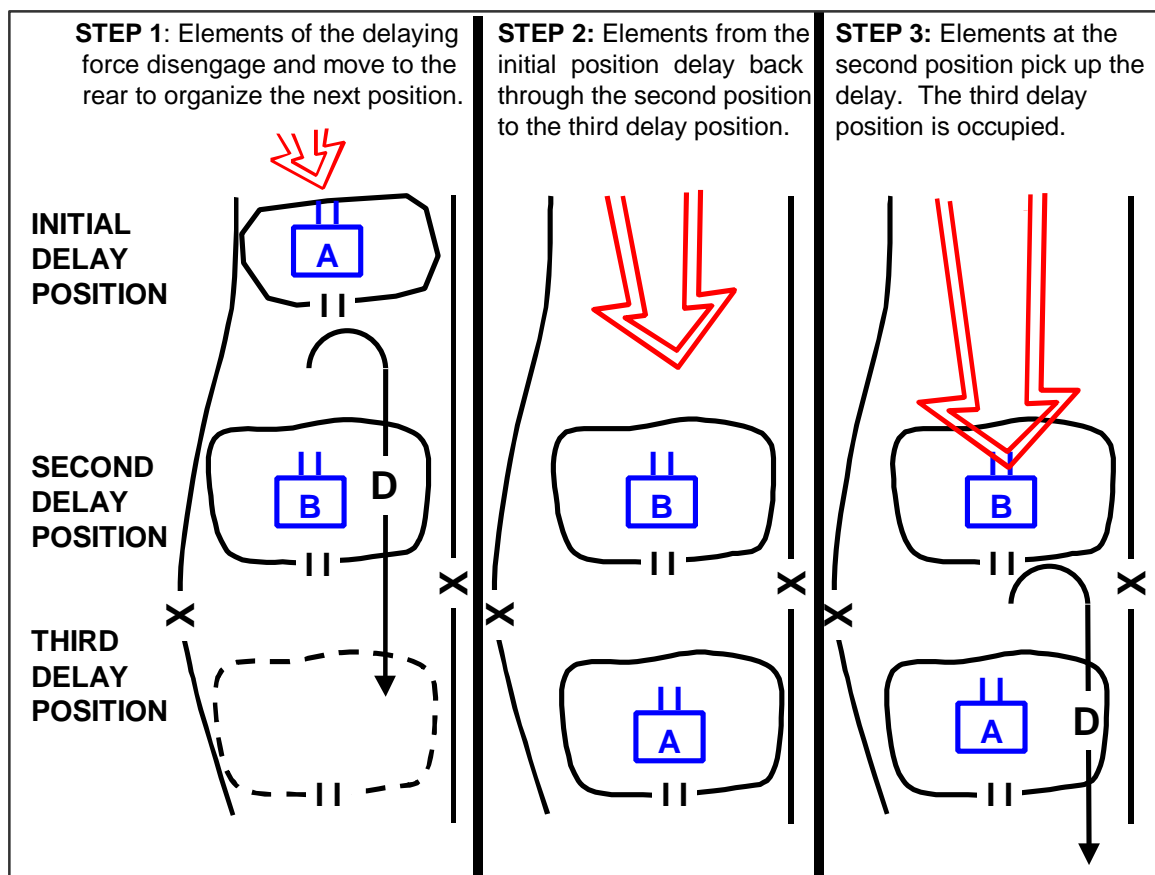


Figure 12-4. Delay from Alternate Positions

**12-29.** The commander uses a delay from subsequent positions when the assigned AO is so wide that available forces cannot occupy more than a single tier of positions. (See Figure 12-5.) In a delay from subsequent positions, all delaying units are committed to each of the series of battle positions or across the AO on the same PL. Most of the delaying force is located well forward. The mission dictates the delay from one battle position or PL to the next. The commander staggers the movement of delaying elements so that all elements are not moving at the same time.

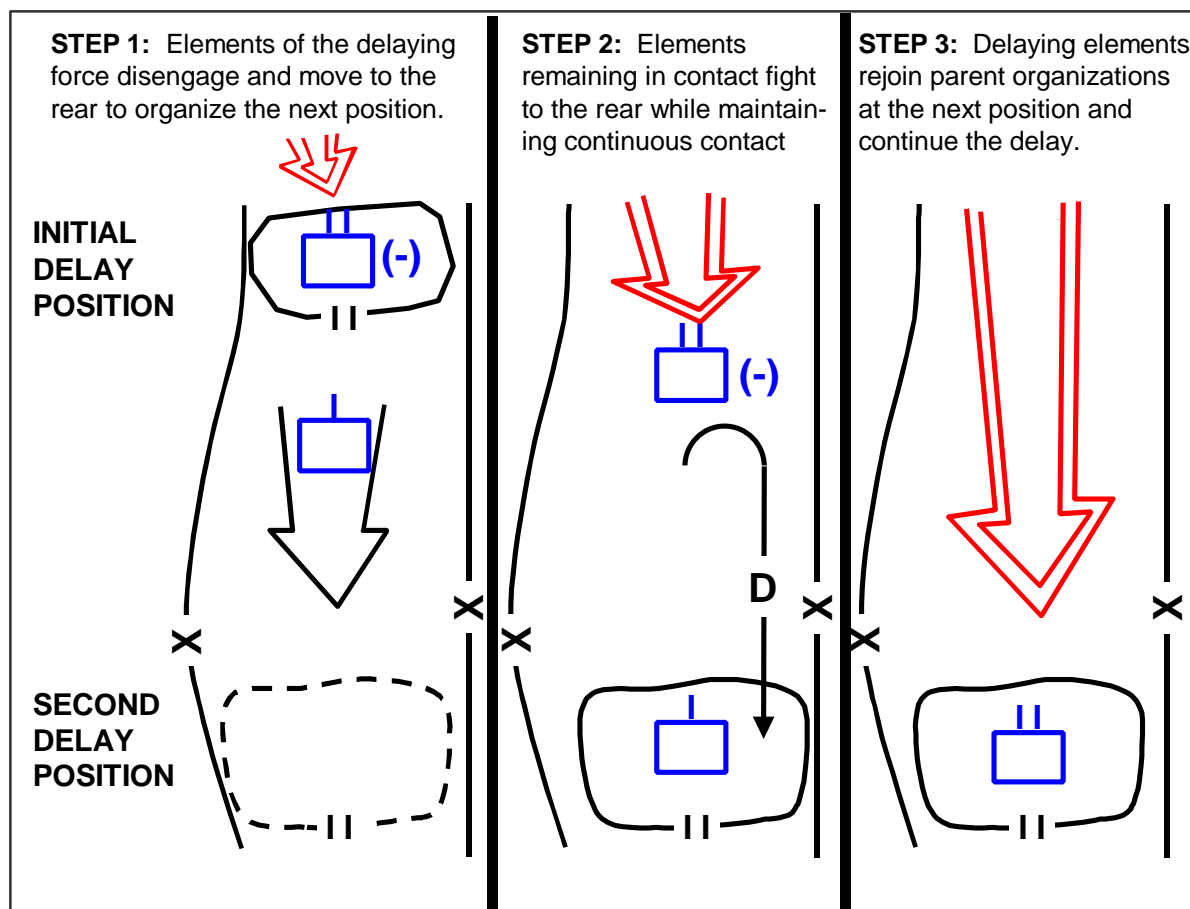


Figure 12-5. Delay from Subsequent Positions

### Effects of Terrain

**12-30.** The terrain plays a decisive part in the commander's decision regarding how to conduct his delay. Terrain may dictate that the delaying force orient on a moving enemy and ambush him. During a delay, compartmentalized terrain facilitates shorter displacements initiated at closer range to the enemy. Observation and fields of fire are equally unfavorable to both sides. Such terrain should restrict the enemy's movement and prevent him from fully exploiting his combat superiority. On the other hand, flat or open terrain requires earlier displacements at greater distances to stay in front of the advancing enemy. In open terrain, the most important consideration in selecting a position is a good, long-range field of fire.

**12-31.** In restricted terrain, where a light force conducts the primary action, positions may be close together (except when conducting a delay using air assault units). In open terrain, delay positions are often far apart. In selecting positions, the commander con-

siders the location of natural and artificial obstacles, particularly when the enemy has numerous armored combat systems.

**12-32.** The commander identifies routes that reinforcements, artillery units, command posts (CPs), and CSS elements will use and keeps them under his control and free of obstacles. Alternate routes should be available so that a friendly force can bypass choke points if they are closed or contaminated.

**12-33.** Disengaging from the enemy while displacing from one position to the next is a difficult procedure. The unit's disengagement plans include the following:

- The maneuver concept of operations for tactical elements after disengagement, which includes the movement routes for each small unit.
- Fires to suppress the enemy and cover the unit's movement.
- Offensive information operations to disrupt enemy C<sup>2</sup> at critical moments.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement, conduct a deception operation, or cover passage points.
- Contact and passage points if moving through friendly lines.
- Disengagement start times.
- The earliest time for CS and CSS elements to move.
- Designation of units responsible for closing of lanes through obstacles and executing reserve obstacles.

### **Develop Intelligence**

**12-34.** When conducting a delay operation, the commander may not get the most effective use of his intelligence assets. The commander echelons his organic and supporting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems rearward to maintain at least partial coverage of the AO during the delay. However, he must rely on a downward flow of intelligence from higher echelons to make up for the degradation in collection capabilities that occurs when systems displace.

**12-35.** Initially, intelligence assets focus on detecting when the enemy recognizes that a delay is under way. Subsequently, the focus is on how the enemy reacts to the delay. Intelligence systems monitor and predict enemy attempts to envelop the flanks or strike the rear of the rearward-moving friendly force. They also focus on actions of any enemy airborne, air assault, and attack aviation units that may try to interdict the friendly force's movement. The delaying commander must detect the enemy's advance early to adjust his maneuver scheme and concentrate sufficient combat power to effectively delay the enemy.

### **Conduct Maneuver**

**12-36.** A delay is one of the most difficult forms of defensive operations to execute. The prime reason is that the delaying force must engage the enemy sufficiently to slow

down his movement, yet not become decisively engaged. Also, when flank units exist, the delaying unit must maintain continuous coordination with them as it displaces rearward.

**12-37.** There are many similarities in the tactics and techniques of a mobile defense and a delay. However, units conducting a delay normally do not become decisively engaged except to prevent the enemy from prematurely crossing a delay line or to risk a part of the force to prevent the whole delaying force from being jeopardized.

**12-38.** Heavy forces — armor, mechanized infantry, and armored cavalry elements supported by indirect fires — are highly suitable for delay operations in most types of terrain. Their organic firepower allows them to engage the enemy effectively at long ranges. Their mobility allows them to move quickly between successive positions or to a flank. Their vehicles provide protection that simplifies battlefield movement. These same characteristics also allow heavy reserve forces to rapidly launch counter attacks to extract delaying forces from untenable situations.

**12-39.** Light forces are especially suited to conduct delays in broken, close, and built-up terrain. They take advantage of such terrain, reinforced by the extensive use of situational obstacles, to hinder the mobility of enemy combat systems and supporting tactical vehicles. They can also participate in stay-behind operations. This type of terrain offers cover for the movement of light forces and favors the use of ambushes against the enemy. Because of the restrictions on organic, motorized transportation assets and the limited protection available to light infantry units, the commander must specifically plan for their displacement. While all light forces can move rapidly by air, a delay offers little opportunity for airborne forces to use their unique entry capability.

**12-40.** The commander may employ air assault forces in a manner similar to that of other light infantry units in a delay. However, they possess additional useful capabilities in a delay operation. They can rapidly deploy, redeploy, and disperse even in open terrain, if the weather is suitable and the necessary landing zones (LZs) and pickup zones (PZs) are available. The combination of light infantry, attack helicopters, and fire support systems found in air assault units allows the delaying commander to rapidly concentrate combat power at key locations to attrit the enemy through repeated ambushes. The combined arms nature of air assault units also makes them extremely useful for conducting security, e.g., flank protection, and reserve operations over large geographical areas against heavy and light enemy forces. However, their extraction is a high-risk

activity when pressured by a heavy enemy or in the presence of a significant air defense threat.

**12-41.** Attack aviation units are extremely useful when employed as a component of the rear guard. The commander can also use them to conduct counterattacks and spoiling attacks as part of his combined arms team. Other uses of Army aviation in a delay include the rapid rearward movement of CSS assets, the deployment of light forces, and reconnaissance.

**12-42.** Normally, countermobility is the most important engineer task unless the delaying force must cross one or more major obstacles, in which case the major engineer task is mobility, specifically breach operations. The commander must set realistic and specific priorities for the engineer effort. He monitors its progress to prevent it from dissipating throughout the area. The commander employs his engineers in depth. This is crucial when the commander conducts noncontiguous operations or when the enemy attacks deep into the sustainment area of a force conducting contiguous operations, or when the enemy has the ability to employ weapons of mass destruction. The maneuver element provides security for the engineers so that they can concentrate their efforts on engineer tasks.

**12-43.** Because of the importance of mobility and countermobility tasks, a unit conducting a delay probably has few engineer assets to devote to the survivability function. Units should maximize the use of smoke when and where weather conditions allow to provide concealment for movement and assembly. Smoke curtains, blankets, and haze may protect withdrawing columns, routes, and critical points. The commander takes precautions to ensure that the smoke does not provide a screen for the enemy's advance. (See FM 3-50, *Smoke Operations*.)

## **PREPARE**

**12-44.** The defensive preparations outlined in Chapter 8 also apply during the conduct of a delay. As always, resources, including the time available, determine the extent of preparations. The commander assigns a high priority to reconnaissance. Additionally, the preparation of subsequent positions receives a higher priority than it does in either a mobile or an area defense. It is not always possible to complete all preparations before the start of the delay operation. Consequently, delaying units continue to prepare and adapt plans as the situation develops.

**12-45.** In the delay, the commander uses battle positions in a manner similar to the way they are used in the defense. However, when organizing his battle positions, he

places more emphasis on width, than depth as well as reconnaissance and the preparation of routes of displacement. Within each battle position, most of the available firepower is oriented toward the expected enemy avenue of approach. However, the commander must provide adequate flank and rear security since the delaying unit must furnish its own security. Each crew and squad should be familiar with the routes from its primary positions to alternate, supplementary, and sequential positions. In preparing a battle position, the commander conducting a delay places less emphasis on installing protective obstacles, final protective fires, and ammunition stockpiling than he would in either an area or a mobile defense. In a delay, battle positions are sometimes referred to as delay positions.

## EXECUTE

**12-46.** The complex nature of a delay requires the subordinate elements of a delaying force to execute different yet complementary actions. In a single delaying operation, attacks, area defenses, mobile defenses, and other actions may occur in any sequence or simultaneously. For example, the commander may elect to assign one delaying element the task of holding a key road intersection for a period of time so a reserve force can strike the enemy's flank. As a result, the enemy must deploy into a hasty defense, which then delays his attack.

**12-47.** The commander deploys his security force well forward of his initial delay position to give early warning of the enemy approach. As the enemy approaches, the security force detects his approach and reports his maneuver. The commander reconciles these reports against his decision support and event templates to confirm the enemy's probable course of action. The commander can direct one subordinate element to maneuver in a manner designed to draw the advancing enemy into a position of disadvantage, based on his interpretation of how the battle will unfold.

**12-48.** The security force fixes, defeats, and destroys the enemy's reconnaissance and security elements without risking decisive engagement. It directs fires at the approaching enemy force as far forward of the delay positions as possible. Engaging a moving enemy at long ranges tends to inflict far more casualties on him than he can inflict on the delaying force; it also slows down his tempo of operations. The more a delaying force can blind an enemy and eliminate his reconnaissance assets, the more likely he is to hesitate and move with caution.

**12-49.** Once the security force makes contact with the enemy, it maintains contact. As the enemy approaches, it moves by bounds back to the flanks of the defending units,

keeping the enemy under constant observation. This helps prevent the enemy from finding gaps between delaying units and attacking the exposed flanks of delaying units. The security force uses covered, concealed, and coordinated routes to avoid enemy and friendly fires.

**12-50.** Recovering security assets may be more difficult if the security force needs to pass through the range fan of friendly tanks and other direct fire weapons in their movement. Recovery should be to the flanks of delay positions and not through engagement areas and target reference points unless absolutely necessary. Security forces should move so that they do not reveal the locations of other friendly elements.

**12-51.** The main body uses a variety of tactics to execute the delay. These include ambushes, counterattacks, spoiling attacks, artillery raids, jamming, and air interdiction. The commander of the delay force preserves his freedom to maneuver by engaging the enemy with sufficient force to temporarily stop his advance. The delay force uses obstacles and defensive positions in depth to slow and canalize the enemy and exploit the mobility of its combat systems to confuse and defeat the enemy. Once a delay starts, units displace rapidly between positions. Whenever possible, the commander grasps any fleeting opportunity to seize the initiative, even if only temporarily. By aggressively contesting the enemy's initiative through offensive action, the delaying force avoids passive patterns that favor the attacking enemy. The delaying force may conduct strong counterattacks from unexpected directions to temporarily confuse the enemy commander. Attacking an enemy throws him off stride, disorganizes his forces, confuses his picture of the fight, and helps prolong the delay. In turn, this confusion may affect the enemy's tempo and momentum. It also affects the movement of enemy reserves and other follow-on forces. However, the delaying force seeks to avoid decisive engagement.

**12-52.** In a delay, the commander uses his fire support assets to delay the enemy force, inflict casualties on him, and assist the friendly force to gain a mobility advantage over the enemy. Indirect fires continue throughout the delay. The effects of the commander's fire support assets can disrupt the enemy's follow-on forces and restrict the immediate battle to his committed forces. Close air support and attack helicopters can engage enemy forces before they come within range of the supporting field artillery systems. However, they are a limited resource. Early commitment of aviation assets may be a mistake if these assets are not in a position to significantly augment the killing power of the unit in contact. Generally, aviation assets are more effective when used to assist the delaying force in maintaining its freedom of maneuver.

**12-53.** Artillery and mortar systems support the direct fire fight to prevent the enemy from conducting a combined arms attack on the delay position. As the enemy encounters each situational obstacle, he is engaged by these fire support systems. These fires should cause enemy armored forces to button up and slow down. Artillery and mortar systems can use fires to separate enemy formations by striking the enemy when he concentrates near choke points and in engagement areas. Integrating fires and obstacles makes it difficult for the enemy to traverse engagement areas. The delaying force breaks the enemy's momentum by forcing him to deploy and by inflicting casualties. Fires in support of close operations assist delaying forces by:

- Assisting in disengaging maneuver forces.
- Suppressing the enemy.
- Degrading the enemy's ability to move and communicate.
- Obscuring the enemy's overwatch positions and degrade his intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and target acquisition systems.
- Reinforcing or closing breaches or lanes in obstacles.
- Executing final protective fires (FPFs).
- Screening friendly displacements and disengagements by using smoke. (This also degrades the enemy's terminal guidance of his precision-guided munitions.)
- Destroying high-payoff targets.
- Supporting limited counterattacks.

**12-54.** As the enemy approaches the delay position, it crosses one or more trigger lines and moves into engagement areas within the range of the delaying force's antiarmor missiles, tank cannons, and small arms. The commander holds his direct fire until the enemy is positioned where the fire plan and scheme of maneuver require their use. He controls these fires from the delaying force in the same manner as in any defensive operation. The more damage the delaying force can inflict on the enemy, the longer it can stay in position.

**12-55.** As the enemy presses his attack and attempts to maneuver against the delaying force, the commander monitors the action closely to guide the displacements of the delay force to anticipate possible decisive engagement while accomplishing the delay mission. When the enemy begins to think that he is successfully maneuvering against a friendly position, he is engaged by indirect fires while the delaying force disappears behind a cloud of smoke, dust, and exploding munitions. Intense final protective fires and fires aimed at and behind recently evacuated friendly delay positions allow the delaying force to disengage from an attacking enemy.



**12-56.** Division and brigade commanders generally decentralize execution of a delay to battalion and lower levels. Those senior commanders must rely on their subordinates to execute the mission and request help if and when needed. The commander establishes the acceptable risk and displacement criteria. Subordinates displace once they meet the previously established delay criteria. This displacement may be a preplanned event or time-dependent. The senior commander monitors the execution of the delay and intervenes when the displacement of one unit threatens the survival of another.

**12-57.** The delaying force relies heavily on artillery fires and air support to suppress the enemy so it can disengage, move, and occupy new positions. If a subordinate element cannot maintain separation from the enemy, the commander can shift additional combat multipliers and other resources to that particular AO to counter the enemy's unplanned success. As one subordinate element displaces, the delaying commander may order other subordinate elements to change their orientation to cover the move. Each displacing element travels along its designated route, using reserve demolitions as required and requesting additional fire support if the enemy is able to maintain contact.

**12-58.** Passing through obstacle lanes during displacement between positions poses significant risks to the delaying force. The unit passing through a linear obstacle becomes more vulnerable to enemy attack because of the danger of the delaying force becoming congested on the far side of the obstacle. The commander must attempt to prevent the enemy from engaging the passing unit until it can redeploy into a tactical formation.

**12-59.** The commander retains his reserve for use at the decisive moment. As with aviation, the reserve should not be committed early in the delay unless its integrity is threatened. Typically the commander commits his reserve to help a unit disengage and regain its ability to maneuver or to prevent the enemy from exploiting an advantage. The reserve normally uses a support-by-fire position for this task. If the reserve is committed early, the commander's ability to influence the battle is greatly reduced, unless he can reconstitute a new reserve. It is possible to commit the reserve several times throughout the battle, but only when it can be extracted, redesignated, or otherwise reconstituted quickly.

**12-60.** In the delay, the force's CSS elements should be located outside of enemy artillery range but be able to provide adequate support. Artillery ammunition stocks must be capable of sustaining the quantity of fire support required in the delay. Maintenance operations focus on evacuating rather than returning damaged vehicles to combat. Unless

vehicles can be fixed quickly on the spot, the unit should evacuate them to the sustainment area because vehicles left behind must be destroyed to prevent their capture.

#### **TERMINATION OF A DELAY**

**12-61.** A delay operation terminates when the delaying force conducts a rearward passage of lines through a defending force, the delaying force reaches defensible terrain and transitions to the defense, the advancing enemy force reaches a culmination point, or the delaying force goes on the offense after being reinforced. If the advancing enemy force reaches a culmination point, the delaying force may maintain contact in current positions, withdraw to perform another mission, or transition to the offense. In all cases, the senior commander must plan for the expected outcome of the delay executed by a subordinate. If he anticipates a friendly counterattack, he plans for the forward passage of the counterattack force, husband resources to ensure relative combat superiority, and provides for the smooth handoff of appropriate areas of operation.

#### **WITHDRAWAL**

**12-62. A withdrawal is a planned, voluntary disengagement from the enemy.** The commander may or may not conduct a withdrawal under enemy pressure. Subordinate units may withdraw without the entire force withdrawing. A unit conducts a withdrawal for a variety of reasons, which are listed at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, a withdrawal may precede a retirement operation.

**12-63.** Although the commander avoids withdrawing from action under enemy pressure, it is not always possible. He may conduct a withdrawal when the situation requires rapid action to save the command from disaster. This usually occurs after a tactical reverse or a unit reaches its culminating point. When an aggressive enemy becomes aware of a friendly force's withdrawal or its intention to withdraw, he attempts to exploit the withdrawal, using all his capabilities to try and turn the withdrawal into a rout. He may have ground and air superiority and continuously attempt to pursue, encircle, and destroy the withdrawing force. He will try to use a combination of direct pressure and enveloping forces and fires to isolate the withdrawing friendly force for later destruction.

**12-64.** Withdrawals are inherently dangerous because they involve moving units to the rear and away from what is usually a stronger enemy force. The heavier the previous fighting and the closer the contact with the enemy, the more difficult the withdrawal. Operations security (OPSEC) is extremely important. A unit usually confines its rearward movement to times and conditions when the enemy cannot observe the activity so that he cannot easily detect the operation to help preserve secrecy and freedom of

action. For example, the commander must consider visibility conditions and times when enemy reconnaissance satellites can observe friendly movements. Operations security is especially critical during the initial stages of a delay when the majority of CS and CSS elements displace.

**12-65.** A unit withdraws to an assembly area or a new defensive position. Alternatively, it can withdraw indirectly to either area through one or more intermediate positions. When preparing the new position, the commander balances the need for security with the need to get an early start on the defensive effort.

## **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES**

**12-66.** The commander typically organizes his withdrawing unit into a security force, a main body, and a reserve. He also organizes a detachment left in contact (DLIC) and stay-behind forces if required by his scheme of maneuver. Units avoid changing their task organization unless they have sufficient planning time. However, circumstances may dictate rapid task organization changes immediately before the withdrawal, such as when the unit must conduct an immediate withdrawal to prevent encirclement.

**12-67.** The security force maintains contact with the enemy until ordered to disengage or until another force takes over. It simulates the continued presence of the main body, which requires additional allocation of combat multipliers beyond those normally allocated to a force of its size. The greater its mobility and range advantages over the enemy, the easier for the security force to successfully cover the main body's withdrawal. The commander organizes the majority of available combat power to the security force as a rear guard or a rear-covering force: the most probable threat to a withdrawing force is a pursuing enemy. However, the commander must maintain all-around security of the withdrawing force. When the enemy can infiltrate or insert forces ahead of the withdrawing force, the commander may establish an advance guard to clear the route or AO. He designates a flank guard or screen, if required.

**12-68.** When a security zone exists between the two main opposing forces, the existing security force can transition on order to a rear guard or rear-covering force. It then conducts delay operations until ordered to disengage and break contact with the enemy. When the withdrawing force is in close contact with the enemy, a security zone does not normally exist. Withdrawals under these conditions require that security forces adopt different techniques. A technique is to establish a detachment left in contact (DLIC) to provide a way to sequentially break contact with the enemy.

**12-69.** A DLIC is an element left in contact as part of the previously designated (usually rear) security force while the main body conducts its withdrawal. Its primary

purpose is to remain behind to deceive the enemy into believing the parent unit is still in position while the majority of the unit withdraws. It simulates — as nearly as possible — the continued presence of the main body until it is too late for the enemy to react by conducting activities, such as electronic transmissions or attacks. The DLIC must have specific instructions about what to do when the enemy attacks and when and under what circumstances to delay or withdraw. If the DLIC must disengage from the enemy, it uses the same techniques as in the delay. If required, this detachment receives additional recovery, evacuation, and transportation assets to use after disengagement to speed its rearward movement.

**12-70.** There are two methods to resource the DLIC. The first is for each major subordinate element of the withdrawing force to leave a subelement in place. For example, in a brigade withdrawal, each task force leaves a company team in contact. Typically, these teams fall under a senior DLIC commander designated by the brigade commander. Alternately, one major subordinate command of the withdrawing force can stay behind as the DLIC. For example, a brigade could leave one battalion task force as the DLIC, which then expands its security responsibilities to cover the width of the AO. (See Figure 12-6.)

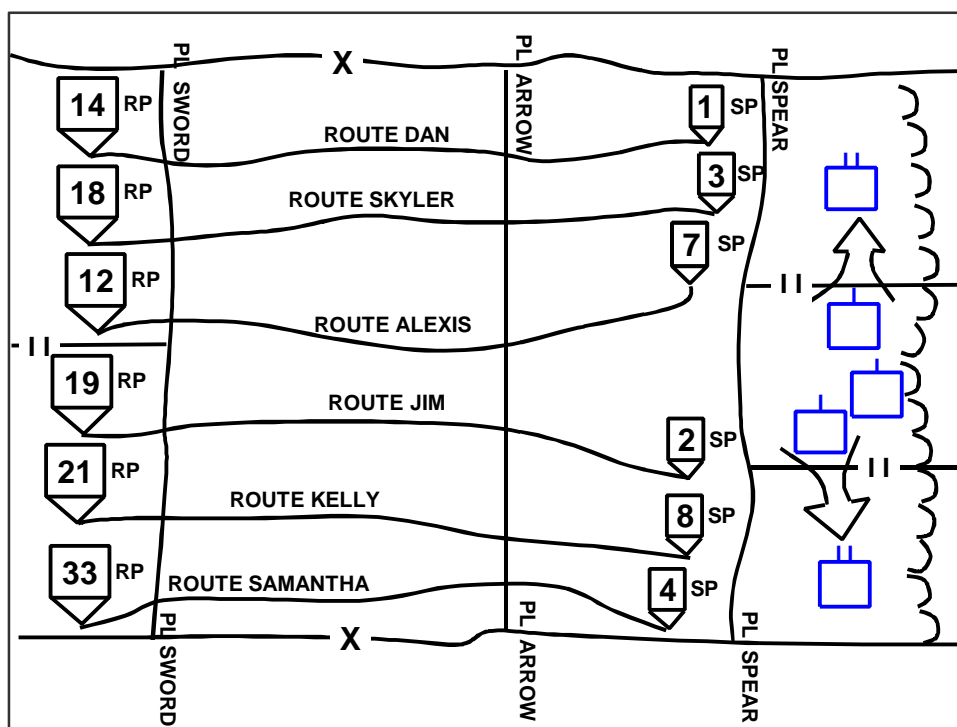
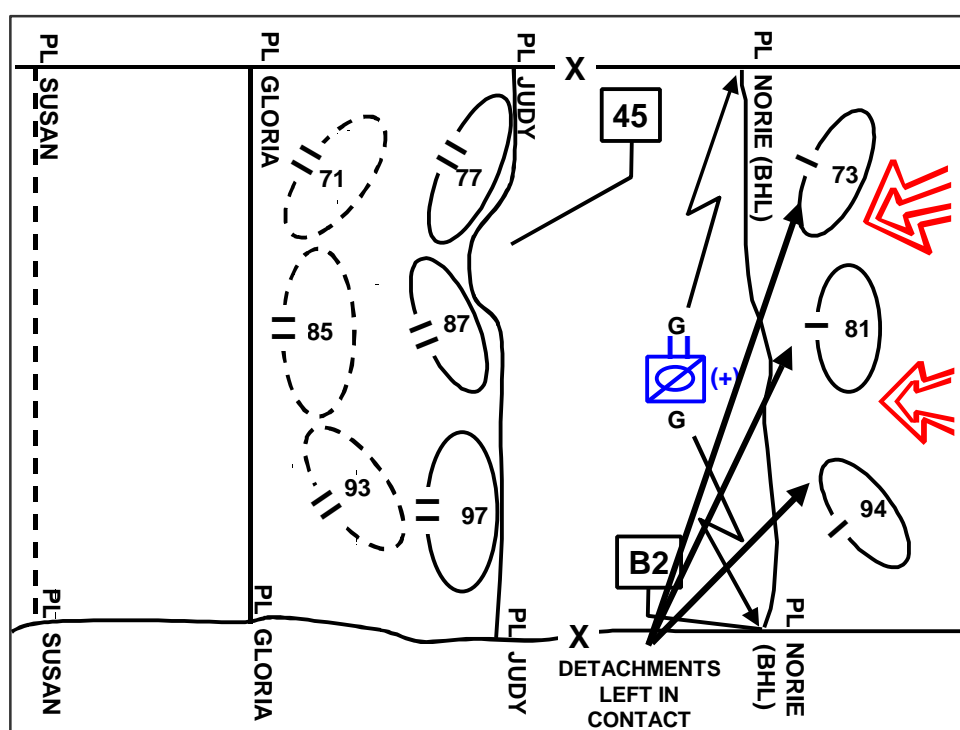


Figure 12-6. Detachment Left in Contact

**12-71.** Often when a DLIC is used, the commander creates an additional security force behind the existing main defensive positions to assist in the withdrawal process. The commander can create an additional force from the withdrawing unit or from an assisting unit. The DLIC can delay to this additional security force and join it, or delay back, conduct battle handover, and then conduct a rearward passage of lines. In either case, the additional security force becomes the rear guard.

**12-72.** The main body of the withdrawing force consists of all elements remaining after the commander resources his security force and his reserve. He generally finds it difficult to resource a reserve, but he makes every attempt to do so. When the complete formation withdraws under pressure, the reserve may take limited offensive action, such as spoiling attacks, to disorganize, disrupt, and delay the enemy. It can counter penetrations between positions, reinforce threatened areas, and protect withdrawal routes. Reserves may also extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces.



**Figure 12-7. Example of Withdrawal Control Measures**

#### CONTROL MEASURES

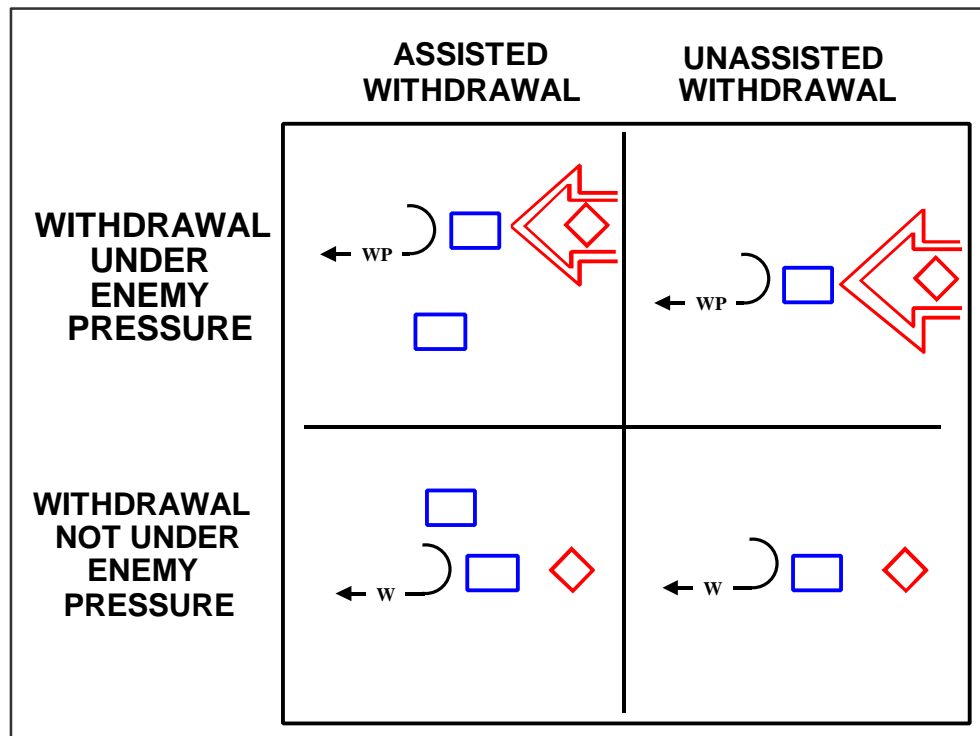
**12-73.** Withdrawing forces must apply combat power to protect themselves while simultaneously moving combat power away from the enemy. This requires careful coordination among all forces. Throughout the operation, the commander must tightly

control rearward movement and maintain the ability to generate decisive combat power at key times and places. As shown in Figure 12-7, the control measures used in the withdrawal are the same as those in a delay or a defense. The routes used by each unit in the withdrawal and the block movement times are also withdrawal control measures.

## PLAN

**12-74.** A withdrawal is planned and coordinated in the same manner as a delay. Some factors of METT-TC apply differently because of the differences between a delay and a withdrawal. A withdrawal always begins under the threat of enemy interference. Because the force is most vulnerable if the enemy attacks, the commander always plans for a withdrawal under pressure. He then develops contingencies for a withdrawal without pressure. In both cases, the commander's main considerations are to:

- Plan a deliberate break from the enemy.
- Displace the main body rapidly, free of enemy interference.
- Safeguard the withdrawal routes.
- Retain sufficient combat, CS, and CSS capabilities throughout the operation to support forces in contact with the enemy.



**Figure 12-8. Types of Withdrawals**

**12-75.** A withdrawal may be assisted or unassisted. It may or may not take place under enemy pressure. The combination of these two factors produces the four variations shown in Figure 12-8. That figure also depicts the tactical mission graphic for a

withdrawal and a withdrawal under enemy pressure. The withdrawal plan considers which of the variations the force is currently facing. Each variation requires a slightly different blending of the three retrace options.

**12-76.** A commander prefers to conduct a withdrawal while not under pressure and without assistance. Actions by the enemy, as well as the additional coordination needed because of the presence of an assisting unit, complicate the conduct of the operation.

**12-77.** An assisted force can provide the following types of assistance to a withdrawing force:

- Additional security for the area through which the withdrawing force will pass.
- Information concerning withdrawal routes.
- Forces to secure choke points or key terrain along withdrawal routes.
- Elements to assist in movement control, such as traffic control points.
- Required combat, CS, and CSS, which can involve conducting a counterattack to assist the withdrawing unit in disengaging from the enemy.

**12-78.** In a withdrawal under enemy pressure, when available routes allow, all units withdraw simultaneously using delaying tactics to fight their way to the rear. In the usual case, when simultaneous withdrawal of all forces is not practical, the commander decides the order of withdrawal. Several factors influence his decision:

- Subsequent missions.
- Availability of transportation assets and routes.
- Disposition of friendly and enemy forces.
- Level and nature of enemy pressure.
- Degree of urgency associated with the withdrawal.

The commander must make three interrelated key decisions : when to start the movement of selected CS and CSS elements, when forward elements should start thinning out, and when the security force should start its disengagement operations. The commander avoids premature actions that lead the enemy to believe a withdrawal is being contemplated. Commanders must anticipate enemy means of interference and plan for the employment of security forces, attack helicopters, and close air support.

**12-79.** The commander conducting a withdrawal without enemy pressure can plan when to begin the withdrawal. He has the option of taking calculated risks to increase his force's displacement capabilities. For example, he may order the main body to conduct a tactical road march instead of moving in tactical formations. The commander can plan for stay-behind forces as part of the operation. (See the section on stay-behind forces that starts on page 12-33.)

## PREPARE

**12-80.** Prior to withdrawing, the main body dispatches quartering parties to help it occupy the new position. Chapter 13 details the responsibilities of a quartering party.

**12-81.** In an unassisted withdrawal, the withdrawing unit establishes its own security force and reserve. It reconnoiters and secures the routes it will use in its rearward movement while sustaining itself during the withdrawal. The withdrawing unit must disengage itself from the enemy.

**12-82.** By concealing supplies along movement routes, CSS operators can simplify support requirements and reduce the enemy's ability to interfere with logistics operations. This allows CSS units to withdraw earlier than they otherwise could. The commander carefully considers whether to place his supplies in caches. Once cached, supplies are difficult to recover if the operation does not go as planned. Other than medical items, the unit evacuates or destroys all supplies to prevent their capture. The commander establishes his destruction criteria, which is time- or event-driven, for each class of supply.

## EXECUTE

**12-83.** Typically, when under enemy pressure, the less heavily engaged elements of the withdrawing force withdraw first. The more heavily engaged units generally withdraw under the cover of a security force using support provided by available fire support and EW assets. They take advantage of obstacles to assist in breaking contact with the enemy. The commander conducts night movements and uses obscuration smoke to screen friendly movement while reducing both the accuracy of enemy direct fire systems and his ability to visually observe friendly movements. The security force continues to use alternate and successive positions until the entire force breaks contact with the enemy.

**12-84.** The security force may remain in position and maintain a deception. The main body moves rearward to intermediate or final positions as rapidly as possible. After the main body withdraws a safe distance, the security force begins its rearward movement. Once the security force begins moving, it assumes the duties of a rear guard. Even if the enemy does not pursue the withdrawing force, the security force continues to act as the rear guard unless the commander assigns that mission to another element. However, if not pursued by the enemy, the security force may remain in a march column.

**12-85.** On order, the main body moves rapidly on multiple routes to reconnoitered positions. It may occupy a series of intermediate positions before completing the withdrawal. Usually CS and CSS units, along with their convoy escorts, move first and precede combat units in the withdrawal movement formation. The commander needs to maintain the disciplined use of routes during a withdrawal. Despite confusion and enemy pressure, subordinate units must follow specified routes and movement times.



**12-86.** When the main body withdraws, its reserve remains well forward to assist the security force and other units by fire and counterattack. The reserve can launch spoiling attacks to disorganize and delay the enemy and extricate encircled or heavily engaged forces.

**12-87.** If the security force and the reserve cannot prevent the enemy from closing on the main body, the commander must commit some or all of the main body to prevent the enemy from further interfering with the withdrawal. The main body delays or defends if the security force fails to slow the enemy. In this event, the withdrawal resumes at the earliest possible time. If the enemy blocks movement to the rear, the commander shifts to alternate routes to bypass the interdicted area. Alternatively, he can attack through the enemy.

#### **TERMINATION OF A WITHDRAWAL**

**12-88.** Once the withdrawing force successfully disengages from the enemy, it has two options. It can rejoin the overall defense under more favorable conditions, or transition into a retirement and continue its movement away from the enemy and toward its next mission.

#### **RETIREMENT**

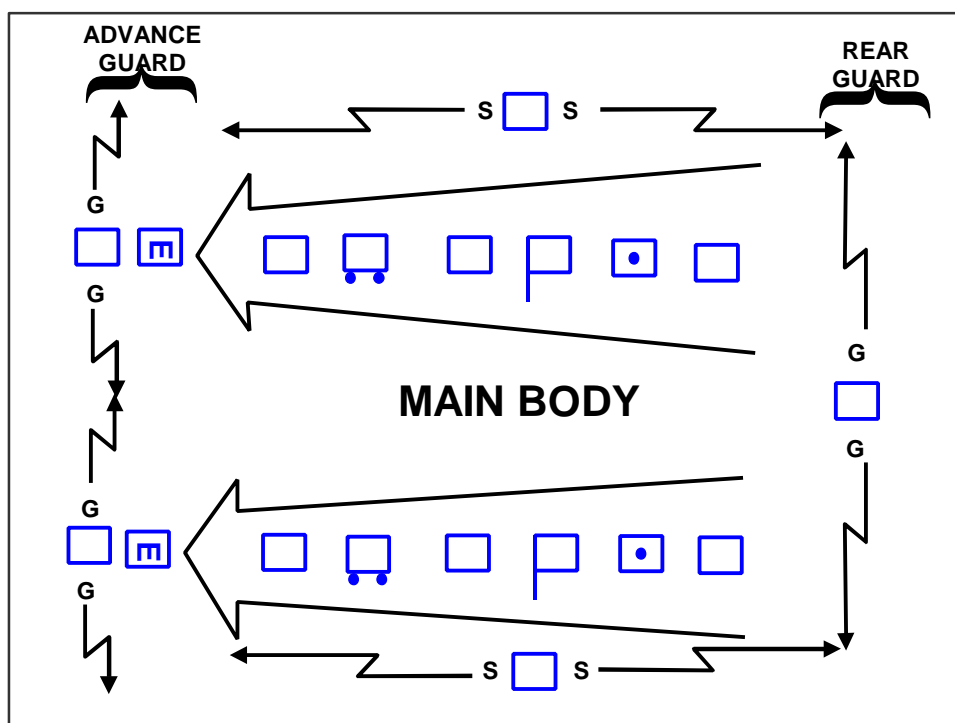
**12-89. A retirement is a retrograde operation in which a force out of contact with the enemy moves away from him.** A retiring unit organizes for combat but does not anticipate interference by enemy ground forces. Typically, another unit's security force covers the movement of one formation as the unit conducts a retirement. However, mobile enemy forces, unconventional forces, air strikes, air assaults, or long-range fires may attempt to interdict the retiring unit. The commander must plan for enemy actions, and organize the unit to fight in self-defense. The commander usually conducts retirement operations to reposition his forces for future operations or to accommodate the current concept of the operation.

**12-90.** When a withdrawal from action proceeds a retirement, the actual retirement begins after the unit breaks contact and organizes into its march formation organization. (While a force withdrawing without enemy pressure can also use march columns, the difference between the two situations is the probability of enemy interference.) Units conduct retirements as tactical road marches where security and speed are the most important considerations.

**12-91.** The retiring unit generally moves toward an assembly area, which should support the preparations for the unit's next mission. When determining the routes the

retiring force takes to the assembly area, the commander considers the unit's capability to support defensive actions if combat occurs during the retirement.

**12-92.** The initial action in a retirement is to move logistics and administrative units and supplies to the rear. At the designated time, the retiring unit executes a withdrawal from action and forms into a march formation. The unit can first move into an assembly area if this step is necessary prior to its move into a march formation to reestablish command and control or resupply. Once it forms a march formation, the force is prepared to initiate the retirement. During the initial phase, the force retires in multiple small columns. As the distance from the enemy increases, smaller columns can consolidate into larger ones for ease of movement control. Road nets and the potential for hostile interference influence how and when this consolidation occurs.



**Figure 12-9. Organization of Forces for a Retirement Operation**

#### ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**12-93.** The commander normally designates security elements and a main body in a retirement. (See Figure 12-9.) The formation and number of columns employed during a retirement depend on the number of available routes and the potential for enemy interference. The commander typically wants to move his major elements to the rear

simultaneously. However, a limited road net or a flank threat may require echelonment of the movement in terms of time and ground locations.

**12-94.** The terrain and the enemy threat dictate whether the retiring force establishes a single rear security force, which is usually a rear guard, or whether each column forms a separate rear security force. These security forces protect the rearward moving columns from surprise, harassment, and attack by any pursuing enemy force. Their size and composition depend on the strength and imminence of the enemy threat. These security elements generally remain in march columns unless there is a potential for enemy interference. If the enemy establishes contact, the rear security element conducts a delay.

**12-95.** The retiring march columns normally require an advance guard augmented by engineers. The commander assigns a flank security element to prevent potential enemy interference with the retiring force's extended columns. The commander may designate flank security responsibilities to subordinate march units.

**12-96.** The main body organizes in a manner opposite that of an approach march. Chapter 13 explains the approach march. The movement of CS and CSS units should precede the movement of combat forces. When necessary, elements of the main body can reinforce the rear guard or any other security element. Because fire support elements and attack helicopter elements of the main body can respond most rapidly, they are usually the first elements tasked for this mission.

## **CONTROL MEASURES**

**12-97.** The control measures used in a retirement are the same as those used in a delay and a withdrawal. As in a withdrawal, thorough planning and strict adherence to routes and movement times facilitate an orderly retirement. Typically, the commander controls movement through the use of movement times, routes, and checkpoints. (Chapter 14 discusses movement control measures.)

## **COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT**

**12-98.** During retrograde operations, CSS units echelon their movements to maintain adequate support to the committed force. They maintain maximum dispersion consistent with control and local security. Their goal is to provide uninterrupted support and maximum protection during the time it takes to conduct the retrograde operation. By echeloning support, the commander reduces the amount of time each CSS unit spends moving, preventing it from performing its primary support tasks. High-priority assets may require added protection to prevent their loss or capture. To reduce congestion and interference with the operations of combat and combat support units, the commander should displace his combat service support assets as early as possible, normally in an

environment that provides the enemy limited visibility. The early displacement of CSS units can also prevent revealing friendly future operations to the enemy.

**12-99.** The commander anticipates the effects of retrograde movements on logistics support to ensure adequate support for the operation and the prompt evacuation of casualties. Retrograde movements generally result in increased distances between CSS and combat units which makes providing this support more difficult. Executing retrograde operations generally requires more Class III and possibly more Class V supplies than other types of defensive operations. These supplies must be available for emergency issue. These two factors combine to increase the demand for transportation assets and the allocation of space on main supply routes. This, in turn, increases the need for movement management and prepositioned services and supplies. Combat service support units carry and cache necessary fuel and ammunition stocks as required by the specific situation.

**12-100.** The logistics support provided must be mobile to cope with demands of the fluid tactical situation that typically occurs during a retrograde operation. The commander prevents unnecessary supplies from accumulating in areas that will be abandoned. Only essential medical and logistics support should be located in the area involved in the retrograde operation.

**12-101.** The commander establishes his maintenance, recovery, and evacuation priorities and his destruction criteria for inoperable equipment in paragraph 4 of the operations order. Maintenance requirements generally overwhelm the organic capabilities of forward units during a retrograde operation. Forward units place as much maintenance, recovery, and evacuation assets forward as possible to augment or relieve combat elements of the burden of repairing unserviceable equipment. Recovery and evacuation vehicles position themselves at critical locations to keep disabled vehicles from blocking movement routes. Forward units evacuate systems that cannot be repaired within established timelines using all available means, such as equipment transporters and armored vehicles with inoperative weapon systems. When recovery and evacuation are impossible, units destroy inoperable equipment to prevent capture. When possible, units destroy the same vital components in each type of system to prevent the enemy from rapidly exploiting captured friendly systems through battlefield cannibalization.

**12-102.** The commander assigns transportation priorities to the movement of combat troops and their supplies, the movement of obstacle material to impede the enemy, and the evacuation of casualties and repairable equipment. He keeps his main supply routes open and decontaminated as necessary. Units control the back haul of transportation

assets before the retrograde begins to reduce the amount of transportation required to support the operation.

**12-103.** Generally, the commander prefers to use many separate supply routes rather than just a few main supply routes. Some routes remain open for traffic moving to the front while the bulk of CS and CSS units displace farther rearward. Routes reserved for evacuating displaced civilians avoid crossing or otherwise interfering with the unit's main supply routes to the maximum extent possible.

**12-104.** The commander bases his medical evacuation priorities on the availability of transportation assets and the results of casualty triage by medical personnel. Medical elements supporting the retrograding force must provide rapid evacuation of casualties to medical facilities. Medical evacuation requirements are demanding to a greater extent than normal in the large AOs common to the retrograde. The commander should consider augmenting the ground ambulance capabilities of his forward medical units.

**12-105.** Military police elements of the retrograde force are involved primarily in battlefield circulation control to ensure smooth traffic flow. The commander may augment his military police force to establish traffic control points and route and convoy security. They also help control refugees and enemy prisoners of war.

## UNIQUE RETROGRADE SITUATIONS

**12-106.** Conditions that require the conduct of denial and stay-behind operations can arise during retrograde operations. These two operations have their own unique planning and execution considerations.

### DENIAL OPERATIONS

**12-107. Denial operations are actions to hinder or deny the enemy the use of space, personnel, or facilities. It may include destruction, removal, contamination, or erection of obstructions.** It is inevitable that, on occasion, an enemy will be in a position to capture friendly equipment and supplies. This situation often occurs during retrograde or defensive operations. As a result, the defending commander may be required to conduct denial operations. In denial operations, the definition of a unit's military equipment and supplies expands to include both military installations and any civilian equipment and supplies used by the friendly force. The principles of denial are:

- The commander should deny his enemy the use of military equipment and supplies.
- Steps taken to deny equipment and supplies to the enemy should, if possible, not preclude their later use by friendly forces.

- The commander orders the destruction of military equipment and supplies only when friendly forces cannot prevent them from falling into enemy hands.
- The user is responsible for denying the enemy the use of its military equipment and supplies by means of its destruction, removal, or contamination.
- Deliberately destroying medical equipment and supplies and making food and water unfit for consumption is unlawful under the terms of the Geneva Convention.

**12-108.** The commander who orders the denial operation must consider the potential value of the military equipment and supplies to an enemy when determining the priorities and the extent of the denial operation. Examples of high priorities for denial include:

- Classified equipment, material, and documents.
- POL.
- Sophisticated weapons systems or electronic equipment.
- Heavy weapons and associated ammunition.
- Communications equipment.
- Ferrying and bridging equipment.
- Air, sea, and land transport systems.

Of lesser priority for denial would be any other military supplies, equipment, or facilities that may be of use to an enemy.

**12-109.** The commander's instructions to deny military equipment and supplies must be issued in sufficient detail to prevent the enemy from directly using such assets. Denial must also prevent an enemy from using a system by the cannibalization of several systems. The same parts in each type of system must be destroyed.

**12-110.** Denial differs from countermobility operations because the commander designs denial operations to deprive the enemy of some or all of the short-term benefits of capturing a geographic region. The impact of denial operations on civilian inhabitants and the environment of the region acts as a moral and a legal restraint on their use and scope by US forces. The commander should involve his staff judge advocate and civil military operations officer in planning denial operations.

**12-111.** The commander ensures that executing the denial plan does not adversely affect his future operations. This includes carefully considering the force's demolition policy in relation to the purpose of the rearward movement and the contemplated subsequent actions of the force. Widespread demolitions during a retrograde movement may become a greater hindrance to a friendly force moving back into the area during a counteroffensive than to the enemy during the friendly retrograde. For example, destroying the transportation infrastructure increases friendly logistics difficulties once the area is recaptured. Removal or destruction of militarily significant supplies and

equipment, such as fuel, obstacle materials, and railcars from an area requires the friendly force bring similar assets with them when they reoccupy the area.

**12-112.** The commander can expand a denial operations to prevent the enemy from exploiting resources, such as fuel, minerals, and the indigenous population; routes of communication, such as river locks, railroad switching yards, road interchanges, and bridges; and facilities, such as telephone exchanges, radio and television stations, and the industrial plants of a region. The defending force either removes the resources, supplies, and facilities from the geographical area being abandoned to the enemy or destroys them in place. Denial operations may be either total or limited in nature.

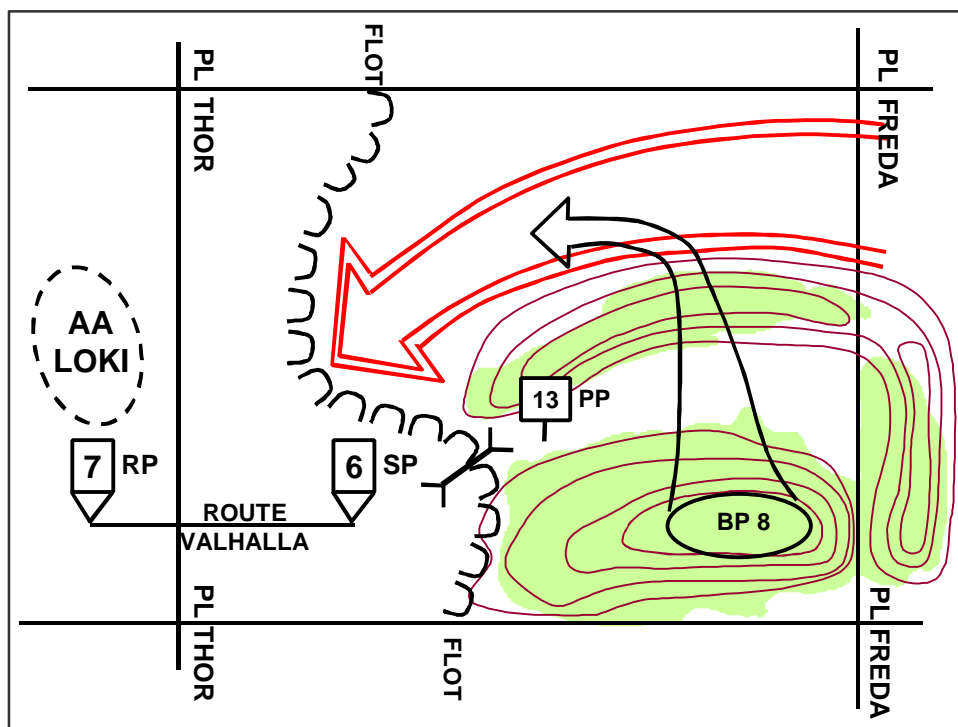
**12-113.** Total denial operations can produce long-term political, economic, military, and environmental effects. Total denial operations have operational-level, and possibly strategic-level impact. Total denial operations consume large quantities of transportation and engineer resources and require considerable time to plan and execute.

**12-114.** Limited or partial denial operations are particularly suitable if the defending force expects to regain control of the geographical area within a short time. The removal or destruction of only a few key components can reduce a facility to limited utility, yet it allows for the facility's quick restoration of all functions once it is returned to friendly control. Generally, American forces only destroy discrete targets of significant military value. Limited denial operations normally do not affect the advance of properly supported enemy combat formations possessing cross-country mobility. However, they can seriously impede an enemy's road-bound and rail-bound logistics support if executed with skill and imagination according to an overall plan.

## STAY-BEHIND OPERATIONS

**12-115. A stay-behind operation is an operation in which the commander leaves a unit in position to conduct a specified mission while the remainder of his forces withdraw or retire from an area.** The force should consist of enough combat, CS, and CSS elements to protect and sustain its fighting capability for the duration of the mission. A stay-behind force may also result from enemy actions that bypass friendly forces.

**12-116.** The main purpose of a stay-behind force is to destroy, disrupt, and deceive the enemy. This force has a high-risk mission because of the danger that it will be located, encircled, and destroyed by the enemy, so the commander considers assigning it only after a thorough METT-TC analysis. The stay-behind force attacks enemy combat forces and C<sup>2</sup>, CS, and CSS elements from unexpected directions. (See Figure 12-10.) These attacks may cause enemy follow-on forces to be more cautious and to slow down to clear



**Figure 12-10. Stay Behind Force**

possible attack and ambush sites. The stay-behind force may be required to conduct a breakout from encirclement and linkup operations after it completes its mission. Appendix E discusses the conduct of a breakout from encirclement.

**12-117.** A light infantry stay-behind force surprises an enemy by conducting a series of raids and ambushes. The light infantry force can be inserted via air assault or parachute; it can also be a bypassed force. Attacks in the enemy rear area by heavy forces can cover a larger area than attacks by light infantry forces.

**12-118.** Stay-behind operations eventually require the force to reenter friendly lines or link up with other elements, often in more than one location. The commander must carefully coordinate this reentry to prevent fratricide. The return routes for the stay-behind force must be the best-covered and concealed routes available. Obstacles along these routes that cannot be bypassed should have guarded lanes or gaps.

**12-119.** A stay-behind operation is not a suicide mission. The commander conducts this operation only when he has confidence that the stay-behind force will rejoin the main body, extract itself in alternative ways, or the main body will fight its way forward to linkup with the stay-behind force.



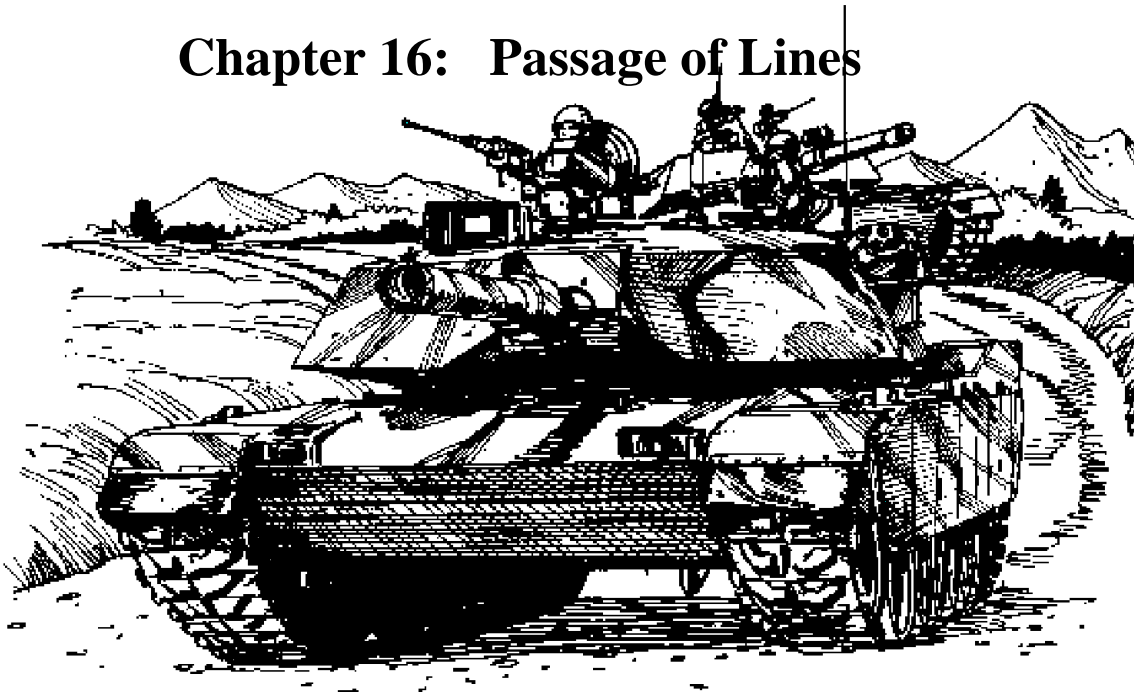
# **PART FOUR: ENABLING OPERATIONS**

**Chapter 13: Security Operations**

**Chapter 14: Troop Movement**

**Chapter 15: Relief in Place**

**Chapter 16: Passage of Lines**



Enabling operations are not operations conducted in their own right. A commander conducts an enabling operation to assist him in the conduct of one of the four types of military actions (offense, defense, stability, and support).

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*"The officers and men who permit themselves to be surprised deserve to die, and the commanding general will spare no efforts to secure them their desserts."*

D.H. Hill, 1863

## CHAPTER 13

# SECURITY OPERATIONS

Security operations are those operations undertaken by a commander to provide early and accurate warning of enemy operations, to provide the force being protected with time and maneuver space within which to react to the enemy and develop the situation to allow the commander to effectively use the protected force. The ultimate goal of security operations is to protect the force from surprise and reduce the unknowns in any situation. A commander may conduct security operations to the front, flanks, or rear of his force. The main difference between security operations and reconnaissance operations is that security operations orient on the force or facility being protected rather than on the enemy. Security operations are normally shaping operations.

**13-2.** All forces, regardless of whether they are combat, combat support (CS), or combat service support (CSS) have an inherent responsibility to provide for their own local security. Local security consists of observation posts, local security patrols, perimeter security, and other measures to provide close-in security of a force. (Local security is covered in echelon-specific manuals and is not discussed in this chapter.) This chapter f o-

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cuses on security operations conducted by one force or a subordinate element of a force that provides security for the larger force.

**13-3.** All maneuver forces are capable of conducting security operations. Ground and air cavalry units and scout platoons are trained and equipped to conduct security missions; however, there are rarely enough of them to meet all the security needs of a force. If possible, a force should identify subordinate maneuver elements to perform specific security missions. This will allow those subordinate elements to add these missions to their mission essential task list (METL) and train for them.

**13-4.** The forms of security operations are screen, guard, cover, and area security. The screen, guard, and cover, respectively, contain increasing levels of combat power and provide increasing levels of security for the main body. However, more combat power in the security force means less for the main body. Area security preserves the commander's freedom to move his reserves, position fire support means, conduct command and control operations, and provide for sustainment operations.

**13-5.** A maneuver force commander normally designates the security area within which his security force operates. In this chapter, the force (or facility) being secured is called the main body. When discussing the forms of security operations, the terms *stationary* and *moving* describe the actions of the main body, not the security force.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF SECURITY OPERATIONS

**13-6.** Successful security operations depend on the proper application of five fundamentals:

- Provide early and accurate warning.
- Provide reaction time and maneuver space.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

### PROVIDE EARLY AND ACCURATE WARNING

**13-7.** The security force provides early warning by detecting the enemy force quickly and reporting information accurately to the main body commander. The security force operates at varying distances from the main body based on the factors of METT-TC. As a minimum, it should operate far enough from the main body to prevent enemy ground forces from observing or engaging the main body with direct fires. The earlier the security force detects the enemy, the more time the main body has to react. The commander positions ground security and aeroscouts to provide long-range observation of expected

enemy avenues of approach and reinforces them with available intelligence collection systems to maximize warning time.

#### **PROVIDE REACTION TIME AND MANEUVER SPACE**

**13-8.** The security force provides the main body with enough reaction time and maneuver space to effectively respond to likely enemy actions by operating at a distance from the main body and by offering resistance to enemy forces. The commander determines the amount of time and space required to effectively respond from information provided by the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process and the main body commander's guidance regarding time to react to enemy courses of action based on the factors of METT-TC. The security force that operates farthest from the main body and offers more resistance provides more time and space to the main body. It attempts to hinder the enemy's advance by taking actions within its capabilities and mission constraints.

#### **ORIENT ON THE FORCE OR FACILITY TO BE SECURED**

**13-9.** The security force focuses all its actions on protecting and providing early warning to the secured force or facility. It operates between the main body and known or suspected enemy units. The security force must move as the main body moves and orient on its movement. The security force commander must know the main body's scheme of maneuver to maneuver his force so as to remain between the main body and the enemy. The value of terrain occupied by the security force hinges on the protection it provides to the main body commander.

#### **PERFORM CONTINUOUS RECONNAISSANCE**

**13-10.** The security force aggressively and continuously seeks the enemy and reconnoiters key terrain. It conducts active reconnaissance to detect enemy movement or enemy preparations for action and to learn as much as possible about the terrain. The ultimate goal is to determine the enemy's course of action and assist the main body in countering it. Terrain information focuses on its possible use by the enemy or the friendly force, either for offensive or defensive operations. The security force uses a combination of observation posts (OPs), aviation, patrols, intelligence collection assets, and battle positions to perform reconnaissance.

#### **MAINTAIN ENEMY CONTACT**

**13-11.** Once the security force makes enemy contact, it does not break contact unless specifically directed by the main force commander. Contact does not have to be maintained by the asset that first makes contact, but it must be maintained by the entire security force. The security force must continuously collect information on the enemy's

activities to assist the main body in determining potential and actual enemy courses of action and to prevent the enemy from surprising the main body. This requires continuous visual contact, the ability to use direct and indirect fires, freedom to maneuver, and depth in space and time.

## HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

### OPERATION BAGRATION

During Operation Bagration, 22 June to 29 August 1944, the Red Army destroyed the German *Army Group Center* and recaptured the last significant part of the Soviet Union remaining under German control. Soviet security operations played a major role in this operation's success. Soviet field regulations of 1944 specified the purposes of security operations: prevent surprise attack of the main body by enemy ground or air forces, prevent enemy reconnaissance, and give friendly forces time and conditions for deployment against the enemy.

From April through June, the Red Army conducted security operations against German reconnaissance and intelligence activities. During this same period, Soviet operations directed against German sustainment operations and facilities, conducted by partisans, kept the Germans so busy conducting area security operations that they had few resources to devote to ground reconnaissance. The Red Air Force kept German aerial reconnaissance from looking deep into the Red Army's rear to operational depths. All the Soviet fronts (army groups) preparing for the summer offensive established a 25-kilometer deep security area against German ground reconnaissance. Frontline divisions conducted numerous and frequent patrols to counter German reconnaissance efforts and maintain regular physical contact with adjoining divisions. As time for the Soviet operation approached, the Soviets began a series of diversionary reconnaissance in force operations. Some sixty diversionary efforts were conducted within the four days preceding the start of the operation.

To gain early warning and reaction time, Soviet partisans cut the railroad lines supporting the movement of German reinforcements, forcing them to detrain earlier than planned and road-march into battle, in some cases nearly 100 kilometers. The partisans continued to conduct continuous reconnaissance throughout the operation, reporting the movements of reinforcing German divisions to the Soviet High Command. Partisans also supported the movements of those forward detachments serving as covering forces for the Red Army's main body in the advance. These forward detachments operated as much as 40 to 50 kilometers ahead of the main body to seize objectives essential to the mission of their force. For example, in the final advance on Minsk, the 2nd Guards Tank Corps sent out its 4th Tank Brigade as a forward detachment. Because of the support partisans provided in guiding the 2nd Corps around German positions at Borisov and through a forest, it successfully reached Minsk without opposition.

The Soviets used all available assets to maintain the security of forces involved in the operation. Throughout the operation, the Red Army Air Force provided aerial cover, especially for mobile groups and forward detachments. Because the marshy nature of much of the terrain prevented the use of large mechanized formations, the Red Army used horse cavalry corps, augmented with tanks, to cover ground unsuitable for heavier forces and maintain contact between the widely separated elements of its forward mobile forces.

On the flanks of Operation Bagration, the Soviet 1st Guards Tank Corps served as a covering force against reinforcements or relief efforts from the German *Army Group North*. A combined horse-cavalry mechanized group served the same role in the south for the 1st Byelorussian Front against the German *Army Group North Ukraine*.

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY OPERATIONS

**13-12.** There are a number of general considerations when conducting security operations. These apply to all forms of security operations but are most applicable to screen, guard, and cover missions.

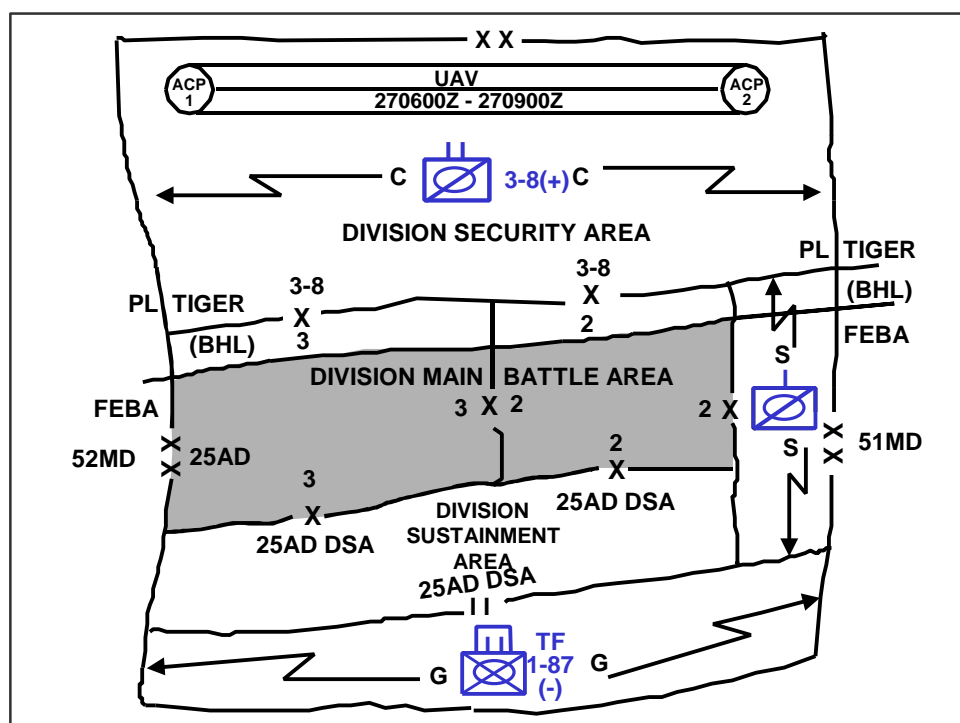


Figure 13-1. Common Security Control Measures

## COMMON SECURITY CONTROL MEASURES

**13-13.** Security operations are depicted on overlays using a lightning bolt on either side of the symbol representing the unit conducting the security operation. They are labeled with the letter S, G, or C to denote screen, guard, or cover. The end of the lightning bolt has arrowheads that touch the designated operational graphics, which define the left and right limits of the security operation. (See Figure 13-1.)

**13-14.** The screen, guard, and cover have many common control measures, starting with boundaries defining the security area. The main body commander establishes the security area. For a guard force operating to the front of the main body, the lateral boundaries of the security area are normally an extension of the lateral boundaries of the main body. The security force's rear boundary is normally the battle handover line (BHL).

**13-15.** To establish a screen to the rear of a force, the lateral boundaries are also an extension of the main body's lateral boundaries, with the screening force's rear boundary being the rear boundary of the entire force. For a flank screen, the lateral boundaries of the security area are an extension of the main body's rear boundary and its FEBA or FLOT. The rear boundary of a flank screen is the lateral boundary of the main body. The rear boundary or another phase line may serve as a BHL between the security force and the main body to control the passing of responsibility for the enemy to the main body. Normally, the responsibility of the flank security force begins at the trail element of the advance security force or the lead combat element in the main body. It ends at the rear of the main body or the lead element of the rear security force. The main body commander clarifies responsibilities as necessary.

**13-16.** Either the main body or the security force commander designates additional phase lines to control the operation. These phase lines may serve as subsequent screen or delay lines. Each element of the security force must report when crossing or occupying them. Displacement to these subsequent phase lines is event-driven. The approach of an enemy force, relief of a friendly unit, or movement of the protected force dictates the security force's movement. The security force commander normally assigns additional lateral boundaries within the security area to delineate the areas of operations (AOs) for subordinate units.

**13-17.** The commander uses checkpoints and named areas of interest (NAIs) to indicate specific areas of interest and to coordinate movement and surveillance. He uses contact points to facilitate coordination with flank units during front and rear security missions or between elements of a security force within the security area. Units conducting flank security for a moving force must remain physically in contact with the main body through the use of contact points. If the security force commander wants to ensure coverage of a specific NAI or avenue of approach, he establishes OPs.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY MISSIONS

**13-18.** In addition to the planning considerations applicable to the other types of operations discussed in this manual, the commander assigning a security mission and the security force commander must address special considerations. These considerations are:

- Force to be secured.
- Location and orientation of the security area.
- Initial observation post locations.
- Types of observation posts.



- Time the security force must be established.
- Criteria for ending the security mission.
- Augmentation of security forces.
- Intelligence support to security operations.
- Special requirements or constraints.
- Fire planning.
- Location and orientation of the security area.
- Integration of ground and air operations.
- Planning the engineer effort.
- Reporting.
- Positioning of command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) and CSS assets.

### Force to Be Secured

**13-19.** The main body commander must designate the exact force to secure. This designation is essential to determine the limits of the security force's responsibilities. The security force must orient on the force it is securing. If the main body moves, the security force also moves to maintain its position in relation to the main body. Table 13-1 shows the typical size of security forces for a given echelon. The limited capabilities of most maneuver platoons prohibit them from having a mission separate than their parent company. Scout platoons are the exception to this rule.

	SECURITY MISSION			
ECHELON	SCREEN	ADVANCE GUARD	FLANK/ REAR GUARD	COVER
Bn/Task Force	PLATOON	CO/TM		
Brigade	CO/TM	BN TF	CO/TM	BN TF(+)
Division	DIV CAV BN TF	DIV CAV (+) BDE	DIV CAV BN TF	DIV CAV (+) BDE
Corps	AR CAV SQD BN TF BDE	ACR	AR CAV SQD(+) or BN TF	ACR (+) or Division
Echelons Above Corps (JTF/Numbered Army)	ACR (+)	Div (+) or Corps	ACR or BDE	Div (+) or Corps

**Table 13-1. Typical size of security forces for a given mission and echelon**

### Location and Orientation of the Security Area

**13-20.** The main body commander determines the location, orientation, and depth of the security area in which he wants the security force to operate. He identifies specific avenues of approach and NAIs he wants covered. Depth in the security area provides

the main body with more time to react to approaching enemy ground units. Occupying a deep security area allows the security force to destroy enemy reconnaissance assets without compromising critical OPs or positions. It also prevents the enemy from penetrating the security zone too easily, and prevents gaps from occurring when OPs or units displace or are lost. The wider the area to secure, the less the security force can take advantage of the increased depth because it will have fewer forces to position in depth. A very shallow security zone may require a guard to provide needed reaction time.

**13-21.** The security force commander conducts a detailed analysis of the terrain in the security area. He establishes his initial dispositions (usually a screen line) as far forward as possible on terrain to allow good observation of avenues of approach into the sector. Next he assigns clear responsibility for identified avenues of approach and designated NAIs. For a screen or guard the initial screen line must be within supporting range of the main body, yet provide the desired amount of early warning.

#### **Initial Observation Post Locations**

**13-22.** The security force commander determines tentative initial OP locations along or behind the screen line to ensure effective surveillance of the sector and designated NAIs. The unit or asset that occupies each OP may shift its exact location to achieve the commander's intent. A commander may place more than one OP along a high-speed avenue of approach to allow an enemy contact to be passed from one OP to another, thus maintaining enemy contact without requiring security forces to displace. The security force commander tasks subordinate units to perform reconnaissance and combat patrols to cover gaps between OPs. To prevent fratricide, the commander places a restrictive fire coordination measure around the locations of his OPs.

#### **Types of Observation Posts**

**13-23.** Observation posts may be either mounted or dismounted. Mounted OPs can use their vehicular optics, weapon systems, and speed of displacement. However, an enemy can detect them more readily than dismounted OPs. Dismounted OPs provide maximum stealth but lack the speed of displacement, optics, and weapons of mounted OPs. It takes a minimum of two soldiers to man an OP, and then for no more than 12 hours. Observation posts manned for more than 12 hours require, as a minimum, an infantry squad or scout section to ensure continuous operation. The screening force patrols dead space and the area between OPs, conducts resupply operations, and rests or sustains its personnel.

### **Time the Security Force Must Be Established**

**13-24.** The main body commander must determine when to establish the security force. He decides this based on the main body's activity and expected enemy activity. He must allow enough time for the security force to move into and occupy the security zone to prevent enemy forces from penetrating the security zone undetected. The factors of METT-TC influence how the security force deploys to and occupies the screen line. If the security mission is the result of a current reconnaissance mission, the security force will already be positioned to begin its mission. This occurs frequently when a reconnaissance mission is halted at a designated phase line. Analysis of the factors of METT-TC determine which deployment technique best meets mission requirements.

### **Criteria for Ending the Security Mission**

**13-25.** Security missions are usually time- or event-driven. The criteria for ending a security mission can be an action by the main body (such as completion of a specific mission), a fixed-time period (for example, not allowing enemy penetration of a phase line for two hours), or criteria based on the enemy force (such as its size). To terminate its security mission, the security force commander normally requires the main body commander's permission to withdraw behind the rear boundary.

### **Augmentation of Security Forces**

**13-26.** The main body commander is responsible for reinforcing the security force. When the security area is large, additional combat and combat support assets may reinforce the security force's organic combat power. Any unique requirement posed by the mission may require assets not organic to the security force. Ground surveillance radars, engineers, and chemical reconnaissance elements are common attachments at the company or troop level.

### **Intelligence Support to Security Operations**

**13-27.** Intelligence assets can greatly enhance security operations. These assets can conduct rapid surveillance of large areas to detect enemy presence. Remote sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, battlefield surveillance radars, signal intelligence systems, and downlinks from theater and national assets can expand the area under surveillance and cue the security force. Advanced aircraft, such as the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior and the AH-64D Longbow, can detect and report enemy forces at extended ranges with thermal imaging and other advanced detection equipment. This permits a commander to concentrate his security force on likely enemy avenues of approach, NAIs, targeted areas of interest (TAIs), and restrictive terrain that degrades sensor performance. The

commander can use his intelligence assets to detect enemy movements. This gains time to reposition his security force and mass other assets to counter enemy actions. The commander increases the size of his security force to reduce his risk if he cannot anticipate sufficient advance warning from his intelligence assets.

### **Special Requirements or Constraints**

**13-28.** The main body commander may impose special requirements or constraints, including engagement, disengagement, and bypass criteria. He may order the security force not to become decisively engaged or fall below a certain combat strength. He may be willing to accept a lesser degree of security, which results from either the loss of more terrain or reduced preparation time by the main body, to preserve his security force for later use.

### **Fire Planning**

**13-29.** The main body commander positions his fire support assets to support his screen and guard forces. He allocates additional artillery to reinforce a covering force. If the security force is assigned a wide area of operations, the commander may have to position his fire support assets to provide effective coverage of only the most likely enemy avenues of approach. This is particularly important for a screen because often the screen force can rely only on indirect fire to delay or disrupt the enemy. Providing adequate indirect fire support to the security force may require the main body to position its artillery well forward in the formation of the main body.

### **Integration of Ground and Air Operations**

**13-30.** Integration of ground and air operations is critical to the success of many security missions. Aviation units, especially air cavalry, assist in the reconnaissance of the security area as the ground element of the security force moves forward. They can perform the following tasks:

- Extend the screen in front of the flank security element's screen line.
- Screen forward of the ground security force.
- Conduct reconnaissance of areas between ground maneuver units.
- Assist in maintaining contact between the security force and the main body.
- Assist in clearing the area between the flank security element and the main body during moving flank security missions.
- Assist in disengaging ground units, which is especially valuable during the conduct of battle handover and passage of lines with the main body.
- Monitor terrain that is hard to reach or would require too much time to cover with ground reconnaissance assets.

### **Planning the Engineer Effort**

**13-31.** Countermobility plays a critical role in the security area. With properly integrated obstacles, the security force can maintain a mobility advantage over the enemy. The commander may mass engineer support in the security area initially and then shift support to the main battle area (MBA) once those units are prepared to begin developing engagement areas. They also enhance the mobility of the security force by identifying repositioning routes and task organizing engineers to provide breaching capability. However, the senior commander must consider the impact of prioritizing the countermobility effort in the security area rather than in the MBA. In the offense a commander can employ situational obstacles, covered by fire, on the flanks of an advancing force to provide additional security.

### **Reporting**

**13-32.** The security force reports enemy activities to the main body. The main body headquarters is responsible for disseminating that information to other affected friendly forces. The main body commander ensures that the security force has access to all pertinent intelligence and combat information obtained by the main body. This supplements the security force's capabilities. By continuously exchanging information, both the security force commander and the main body commander have time to choose a suitable course of action. Force digitization greatly assists commanders in maintaining a common view of the battlefield.

### **Positioning of C<sup>2</sup> and CSS Assets**

**13-33.** The security force commander positions himself to observe the most dangerous enemy avenue of approach so that he can best control the operation. He positions his command post to provide continuous control and reporting during initial movements. His combat trains position behind masking terrain but remain close enough to the combat elements of the security force to provide for rapid response. They are best sited along routes that provide good mobility laterally and in-depth.

### **MOVEMENT INTO SECURITY AREAS FOR STATIONARY SECURITY MISSIONS**

**13-34.** All stationary security missions are established in a similar manner. In deploying into the security area, the security force must deal with competing requirements: to establish the security area quickly to meet mission requirements and to provide the necessary level of security for itself. The security force moves into the security area using one of three basic methods: tactical road march, movement to contact, or zone reconnaissance.

**13-35.** The fastest but least secure method of deploying is a tactical road march from the rear boundary of the security area to the initial positions. The security force moves to a release point on the rear boundary. From the release point, subordinate elements deploy to occupy initial positions, moving by the quickest means possible. This method is appropriate when enemy contact is not expected, time is critical, or an aviation unit is conducting a zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and has found no enemy in the security area.

**13-36.** In the second method, the security force conducts a movement to contact from a line of departure (usually the rear boundary of the security area) to the initial positions. This method is slower than a tactical road march but more secure. It is appropriate when enemy contact is likely, time is limited, terrain reconnaissance is not needed, or an aviation unit is conducting zone reconnaissance forward of the ground element and enemy forces have been detected in the security area.

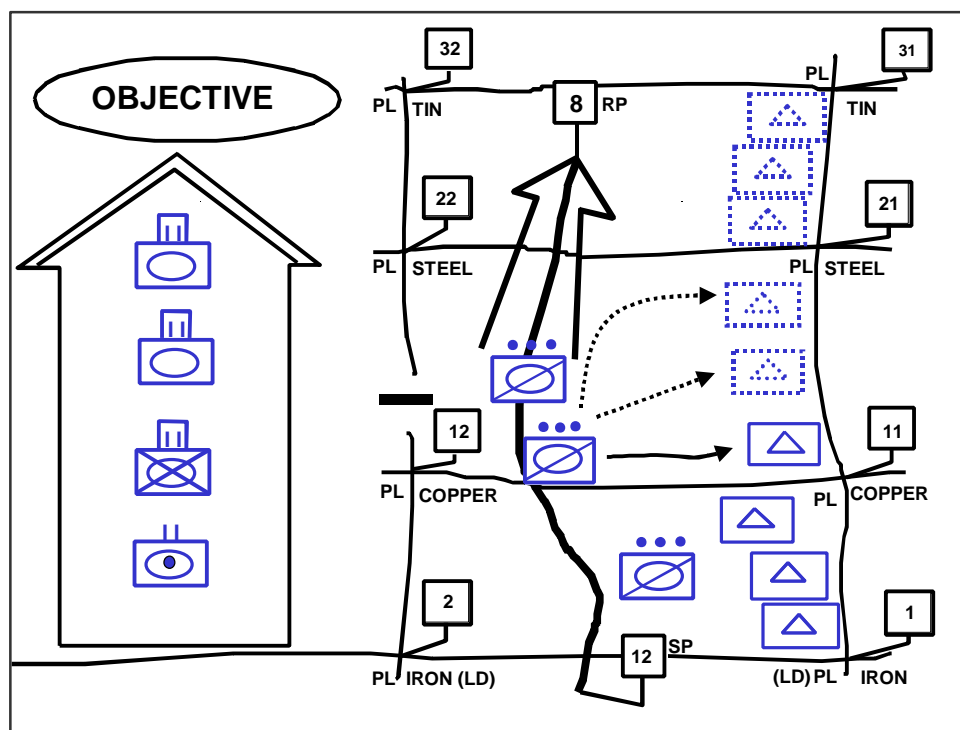
**13-37.** The most secure method for moving to the initial positions is for the security force to conduct a zone reconnaissance from the security area rear boundary, the line of departure (LD), to either its initial security line positions or the forward limit of the security area. Given adequate time, this method is preferred because it allows the security force to clear the zone and become familiar with the terrain that it may have to defend. The security force can reconnoiter potential subsequent positions, such as battle and hide positions, and fire support system firing positions as it moves to its initial positions. A zone reconnaissance is appropriate when time is available and information about the enemy or terrain is unknown. While this technique provides information of tactical value on the enemy and terrain in the sector, it may also be time-consuming. Using air reconnaissance forward of the ground units increases the speed and security of the movement.

#### **MOVEMENT DURING MOVING SECURITY MISSIONS**

**13-38.** There are three techniques of occupying and moving in the security area for moving security missions based on how the security force crosses the line of departure.

- Security force crosses the LD separately from main body and deploys to perform the mission.
- Security force crosses the LD separately from main body; lead elements conduct a movement to contact.
- Security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the limit of the security area.

The security force should not be required to make its own penetration when it faces prepared enemy defenses. This may prevent or significantly delay the security force from assuming its duties. These three techniques are often combined.



**Figure 13-2a. Security Force Crossing the LD Separately from the Main Body to establish a Flank Screen**

**13-39.** In the first technique, illustrated in Figures 13-2a and 13-2b, the security force crosses the line of departure (LD) separately from the main body and deploys to perform the mission. The security force then conducts a tactical road march, an approach march, or tactical movements parallel to the main body, and drops off OPs or occupies battle positions along the flank of the main body. This technique keeps the two forces from interfering with each other during deployment. It is appropriate when another force penetrates the line of contact, the main body is not in contact with the enemy and is moving quickly, the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates that enemy contact is not likely in the area through which the security force is moving. It is the fastest but least secure technique.

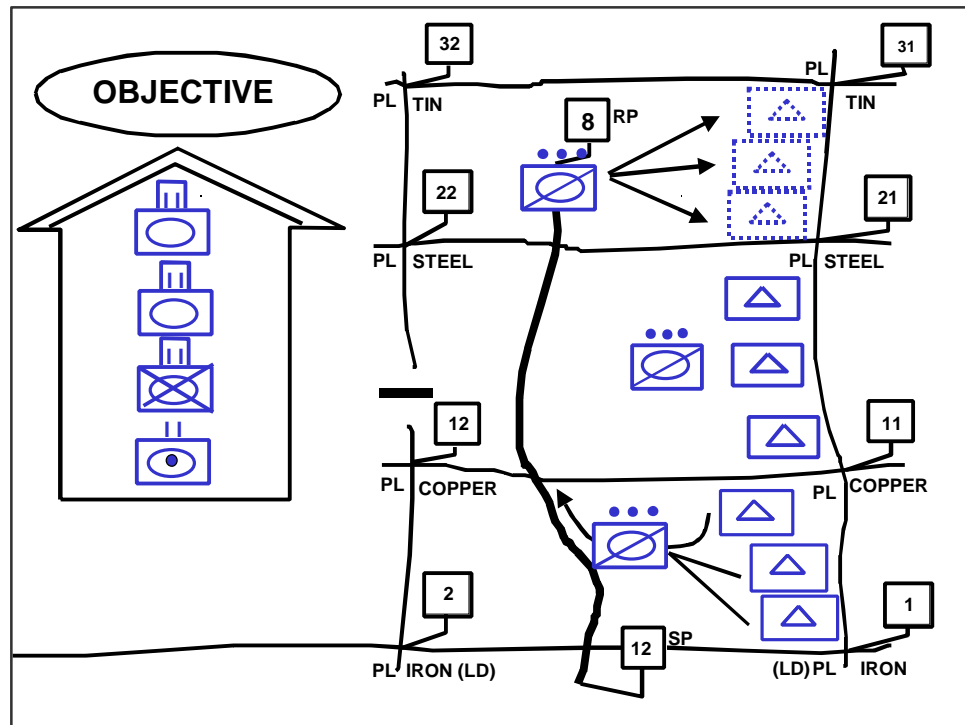


Figure 13-2b. Security force Crossing the LD Separately from the Main Body to establish a Flank Screen (continued)

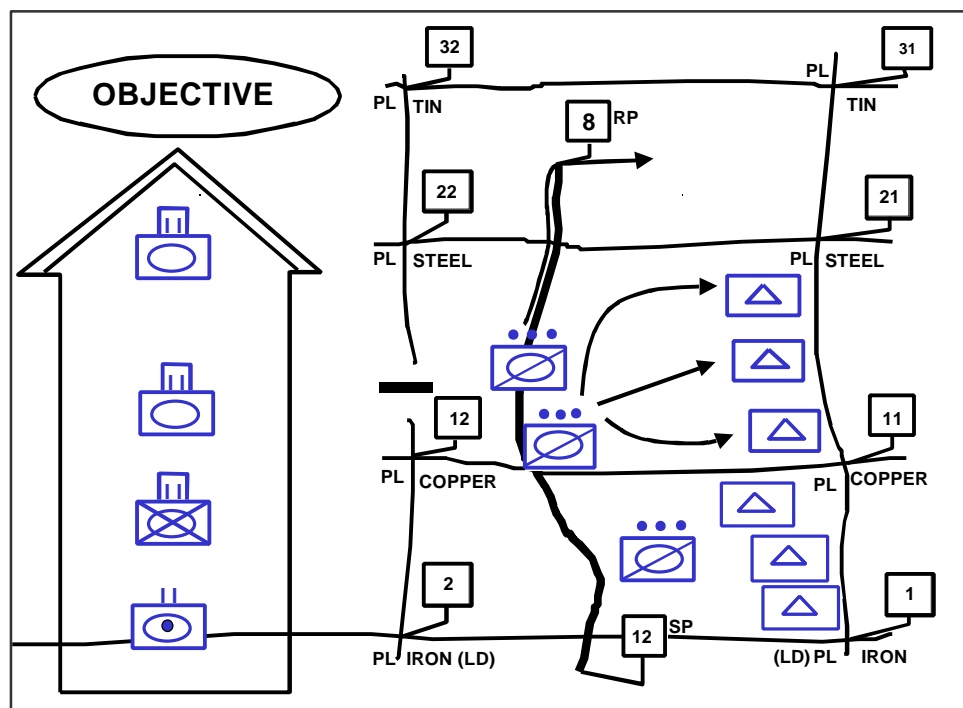
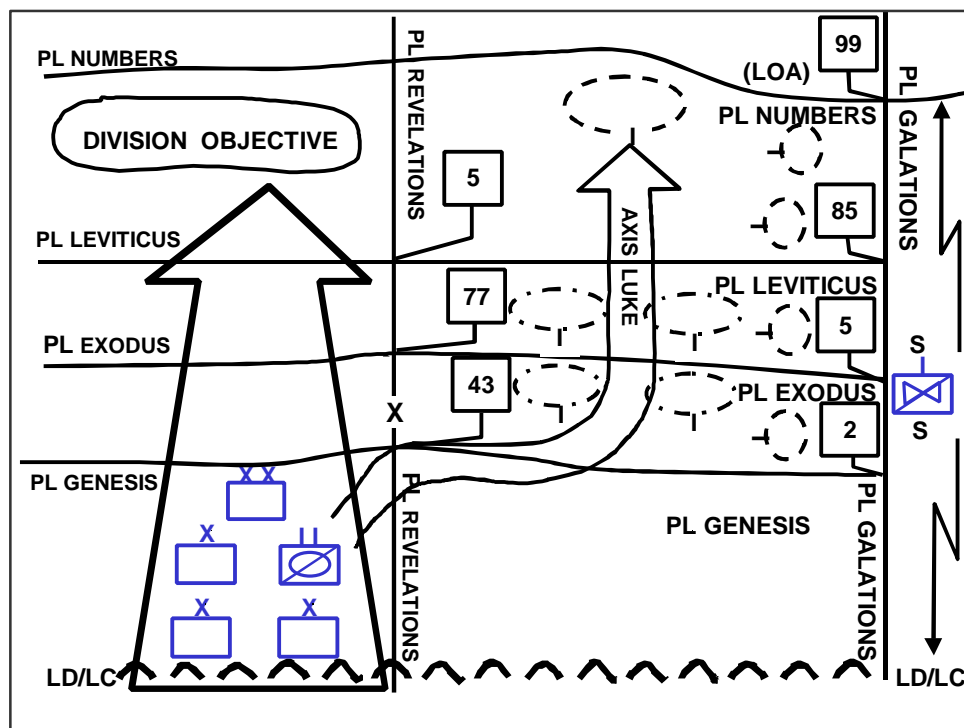


Figure 13-3. Second Technique used by a Moving Flank Security Force to establish a moving Flank Screen



**13-40.** In the second technique, the security force crosses the LD separate from the main body; its lead elements conduct a movement to contact. Follow-on elements occupy positions as they are reached. (See Figure 13-3.) This technique is appropriate to use when the main body is moving slower than in the first method, the LD is uncontested, and the IPB process indicates possible enemy contact. It is slower than the previous technique but provides better security.

**13-41.** Finally, in the third technique, the security force crosses the LD with the main body and conducts a zone reconnaissance out to the far limit of the security area. (See Figure 13-4.) This technique is appropriate when the LD is also the line of contact, the main body makes its own penetration of the enemy defenses along the line of contact, the main body is moving slowly, and the enemy situation is not clearly understood. The security force may follow the lead element of the main body through the gap and deploy when the situation permits. This technique provides increased security for both the security force and the main body; it is also the most time-consuming.



**Figure 13-4. Third Technique Used by a Moving Flank Security Force To establish a Flank Guard or Cover**

## SCREEN

**13-42. A screen is a form of security operations that primarily provides early warning to the protected force.** The unit performing a screen observes, identifies, and reports enemy actions. Generally, a screening force engages and destroys enemy reconnaissance elements within its capabilities but otherwise fights only in self-defense. The screen has the minimum combat power necessary to provide the desired early warning, which allows the commander to retain the bulk of his combat power for commitment at the decisive place and time. A screen provides the least amount of protection of any security mission; it does not have the combat power to develop the situation.

**13-43.** A screen is appropriate to cover gaps between forces, exposed flanks, or the rear of stationary and moving forces. The commander can place a screen in front of a stationary formation when the likelihood of enemy action is small, the expected enemy force is small, or the main body needs only limited time once it is warned to react effectively. Designed to provide minimum security with minimum forces, a screen is usually an economy-of-force operation based on calculated risk. If a significant enemy force is expected or a significant amount of time and space is required to provide the required degree of protection, the commander should assign and resource a guard or cover mission instead of a screen. The security element forward of a moving force must conduct a guard or cover because a screen lacks the combat power to defeat or contain the lead elements of an enemy force.

**13-44.** A security force normally conducts a screen by establishing a series of OPs and patrols to ensure adequate surveillance of the assigned sector. The commander uses reconnaissance patrols (mounted, dismounted, and aerial), relocates OPs, and employs technical assets to ensure continuous and overlapping surveillance.

### CRITICAL TASKS FOR A SCREEN

**13-45.** Unless the commander orders otherwise, a security force conducting a screen performs certain tasks within the limits of its capabilities. If a security force does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, the security force commander must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks must be completed or each of these tasks' priority. After starting the screen, if the security unit commander determines that he cannot complete an assigned task, such as maintain continuous surveillance on all avenues of approach

into an area of operations, he reports and awaits further instructions. Normally, the main force commander does not place a time limit on the duration of the screen, as doing so may force the screening force to accept decisive engagement. Screen tasks are to:

- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the screen undetected and unreported.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of all avenues of approach larger than a designated size into the area under all visibility conditions.
- Destroy or repel all enemy reconnaissance patrols.
- Locate the lead elements of each enemy advance guard and determine its direction of movement in a defensive screen.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report any activity in the area of operation.
- Impede and harass the enemy within its capabilities while displacing.
- Maintain contact with its own main body and any security forces operating on its flanks.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES**

**13-46.** A screen normally requires the subordinate elements of the security force to deploy abreast. A screen force normally organizes itself into a number of OPs determined by the number of avenues of approach into the main force and any additional NAIs it must cover as specified by the main force commander. The screening force may retain a small reaction force or reserve to extract endangered OPs.

**13-47.** The size of the avenue of approach kept under surveillance varies by echelon. Normally, a unit will maintain observation over avenues of approach for units two echelons lower than itself. For example, a battalion's screening force maintains surveillance over enemy platoon-size avenues of approach, while a unit conducting a screen for a corps maintains surveillance over brigade- or regimental-size avenues of approach.

#### **SCREEN CONTROL MEASURES**

**13-48.** Control measures necessary to conduct a screen were previously discussed under common control measures. Examples of control measures associated with a screen are shown in Figure 13-5.

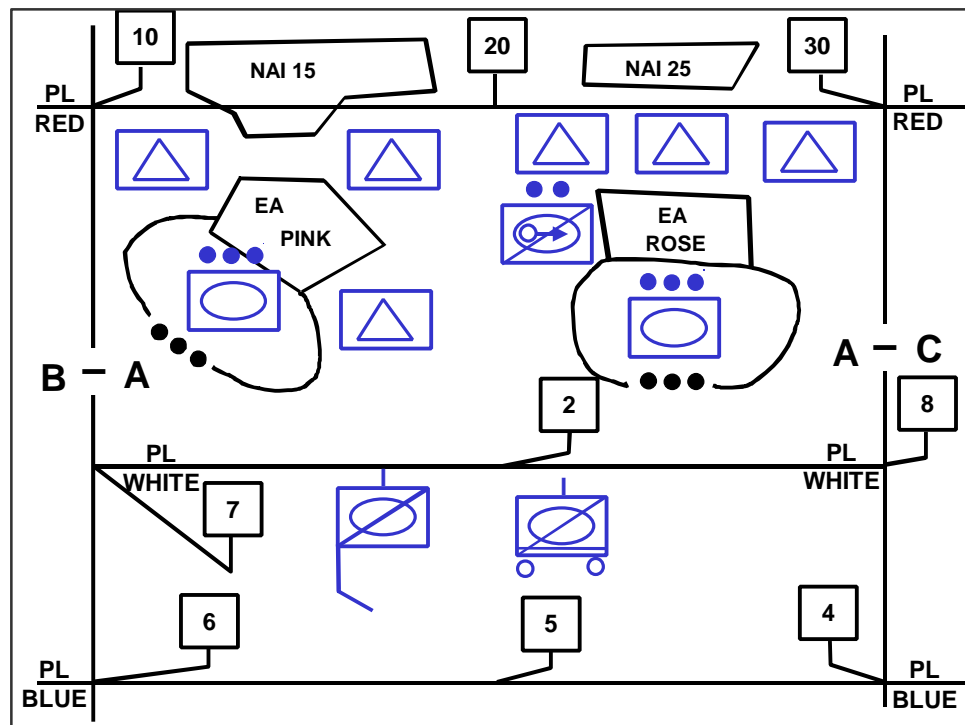


Figure 13-5. Control Measures Used in a Screen Mission

#### EXECUTION OF A STATIONARY SCREEN

**13-49.** In setting up the screen, the screening force establishes OPs with overlapping fields of observation. Patrols reconnoiter areas that cannot be observed from an OP. The force retains a small reserve if possible. If forces are available and the depth of the security area allows, the screening force establishes OPs in-depth on high-speed avenues of approach. The commander plans routes between the initial and subsequent screen lines to facilitate rapid occupation of subsequent screen lines. The screening force reserve deploys in-depth and positions itself to react to contingencies that develop during the screen. The screening force takes advantage of its surveillance, target acquisition, and night observation equipment.

**13-50.** Observation posts should remain undetected while those manning them report the presence of enemy elements. Prompt, accurate reporting is essential to keep the assets constituting the screen from being overrun or unknowingly bypassed. Once the enemy is detected the OP uses fire support channels to direct engagement of the enemy at maximum range. This helps the OP avoid detection by the enemy and prevents the enemy from penetrating the screen line. The screening force may destroy enemy reconnaissance assets with direct fire if indirect fire cannot accomplish this task. It also

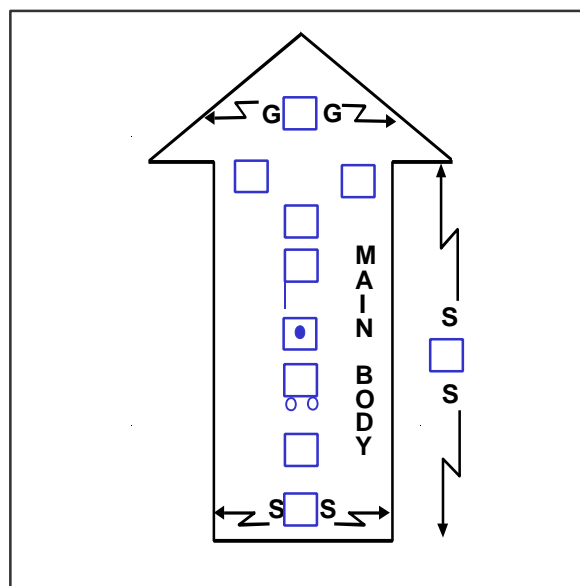
attempts to slow the movement of other enemy elements, primarily through the use of indirect fires and close air support.

**13-51.** As enemy pressure threatens the security of the OP, the unit reports and requests to move to the next screen line. When displacing from one screen line to another, the screening force emphasizes rapid movement while maintaining contact with the enemy. This ensures that any gaps that occur during movement are quickly closed. The screen's C<sup>2</sup> elements displace as required to maintain control and prevent themselves from being overrun. This procedure is repeated as often as necessary.

**13-52.** The screening force commander decides when to move from one screen line to another. However, the main body commander decides when the screening force can move behind the phase line that designates the rear boundary of the security area and hand off the battle to the main body.

#### EXECUTION OF A MOVING SCREEN

**13-53.** A force maintains a moving screen along the flanks and rear of the protected force. The movement of the screen is keyed to time and distance factors associated with the movement of the main body. Responsibilities for a moving flank screen begin at the front of the main body's lead combat element and end at the rear of the protected force. They do not include front and rear security forces. A force executes a mov-



**Figure 13-6. Moving Flank Screen**

ing screen in the same way it conducts a stationary screen except for the movement techniques discussed below. (See Figure 13-6.)

**13-54.** The screening force may use several methods to move the screen as the speed of movement of the protected force or contact is made. Table 13-2 summarizes each method's advantages and disadvantages.

METHOD	CHARACTERISTICS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>Alternate Bounds by OPs</b>	Main body moves faster Conducted by platoon or company/troop Contact is possible Conducted from rear to front	Very secure method Maintains maximum surveillance over the security area	Execution takes time Disrupts unit integrity
<b>Alternate Bounds by Units</b>	Main body moves faster Conducted by platoon or company/troop Contact is possible Conducted from rear to front	Execution does not take a great deal of time Maintains good surveillance over the security area Maintains unit integrity	May leave temporary gaps in coverage
<b>Successive Bounds</b>	Main body is moving slowly Conducted by platoon or company/troop Contact is possible Conducted simultaneously or in succession Unit should maintain an air screen during ground movement	Most secure method Maintains maximum surveillance Maintains unit integrity	Execution takes the most time Unit is less secure when all elements are moving simultaneously Simultaneous movement may leave temporary gaps
<b>Continuous Marching</b>	Main body is moving relatively quickly Performed as a route reconnaissance Enemy contact is not likely Unit should maintain a flank air screen	OPs displace quickly Maintains unit integrity	Least secure method

**Table 13-2. Screen Movement Methods**

**13-55.** Figure 13-7 illustrates four methods of controlling movement along a screen line:

- Alternate bounds by individual OPs from the rear to the front.
- Alternate bounds by subordinate units from the rear to the front.
- Successive bounds by units along the screen line.
- Continuous marching along the route of advance.

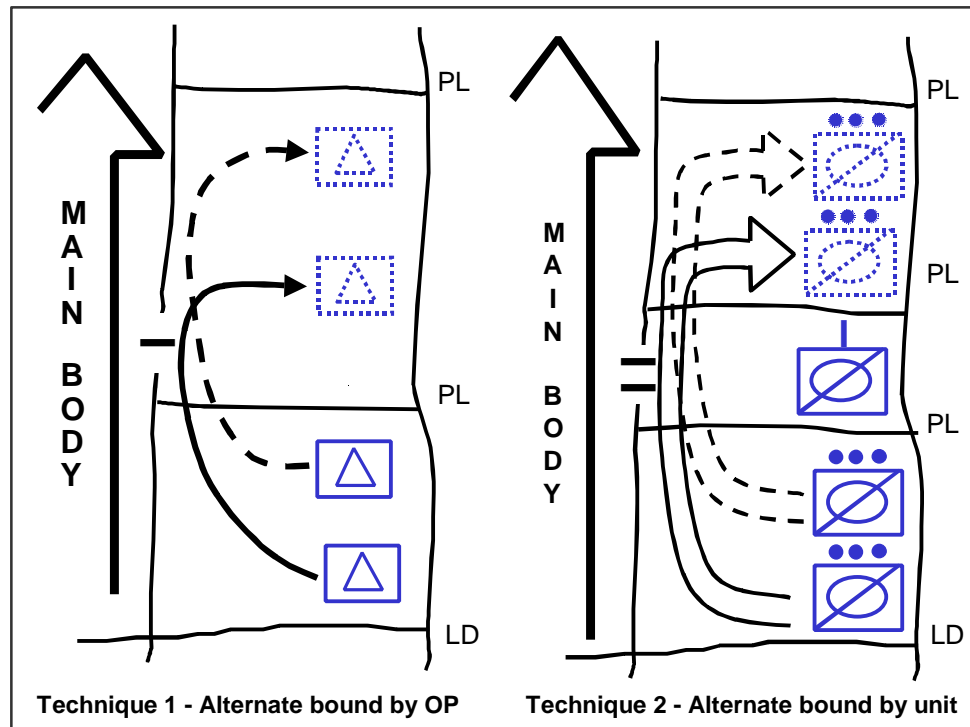


Figure 13-7a. Displacement Methods for a Flank Screen

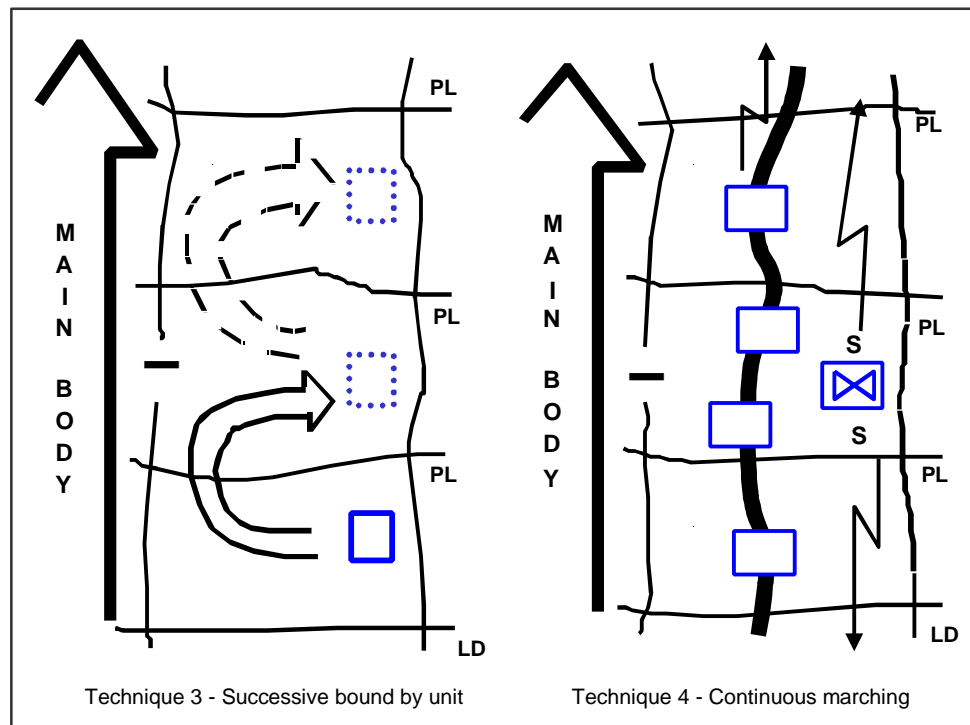


Figure 13-7b. Displacement Methods for a Flank Screen

## SCREENING OPERATIONS DURING LIMITED VISIBILITY

**13-56.** Limited visibility often affects the screening force's ground and air observation capabilities. During limited visibility, the screening force uses all available night and thermal observation devices and depends more on electronic surveillance devices. Although the screening force can use technical intelligence assets to offset limited visibility, it should also adjust its techniques and procedures to the conditions. For example, the commander of a screening force may need to adjust the number and location of his OPs in limited-visibility conditions. He can establish more OPs to cover avenues of approach that become masked in these conditions. He plans for indirect illumination and uses it when necessary. He closely coordinates his patrols to prevent misidentification and engagement by friendly elements. Rigorous sound and light discipline prevents compromise and potential bypass of OPs by enemy reconnaissance forces. Near OPs and along dismounted avenues of approach, the screening force can use trip flares, protective minefields, and mechanical devices, such as noisemakers integrated into tanglefoot obstacles, to detect the enemy and warn of his approach. Additional OPs along enemy avenues of approach can provide depth to facilitate the detection of enemy forces that may have eluded forward security elements.

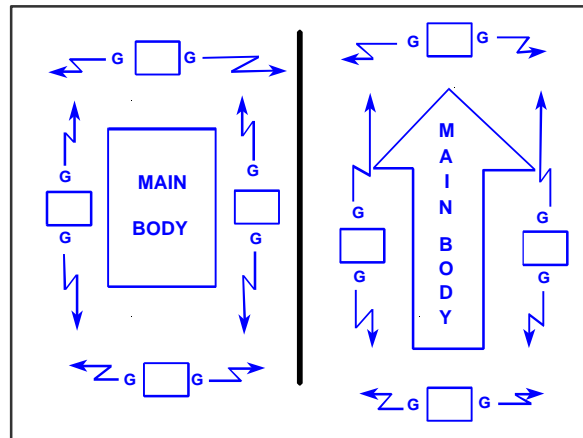
## GUARD

**13-57. Guard is a form of security operations whose primary task is to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body.** A guard differs from a screen in that a guard force contains sufficient combat power to defeat, repel, or fix the lead elements of an enemy ground force before they can engage the main body with direct fire. A guard force routinely engages enemy forces with direct and indirect fires. A screening force, however, primarily uses indirect fires or close air support to destroy enemy reconnaissance elements and slow the movement of other enemy forces. A guard force uses all means at its disposal, including decisive engagement, to prevent the penetration of an enemy element to a position where it could observe and engage the main body. It operates within the range of the main body's fire support weapons, deploying over a narrower front than a comparable-size screening force to permit concentration of combat power.



**13-58.** The three types of guard operations are advance, flank, and rear guard. A commander can assign a guard mission to protect either a stationary or a moving force. (See Figure 13-8.)

**13-59.** A unit conducting a guard performs certain tasks within its capabilities unless ordered otherwise. If a unit



**Figure 13-8. Guard Locations**

does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the guard, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as cause deployment of the enemy advance guard, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. Guard tasks are to:

- Allow no enemy ground element to pass through the security area undetected and unreported.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of avenues of approach into the area of operations under all visibility conditions.
- Destroy or repel all enemy reconnaissance patrols.
- Destroy the enemy advance guard.
- Cause the enemy main body to deploy and report its direction of travel.
- Maintain contact with enemy forces and report their activity in the area of operations.
- Impede and harass the enemy within its capabilities while displacing.
- Maintain contact with its main body and any other security forces operating on its flanks.

**13-60.** A commander employs a guard when he expects enemy contact and requires additional security beyond that provided by a screen. The multiple requirements of the guard mission are often performed simultaneously over relatively large areas. While the guard force's exact size is METT-TC dependent, see Table 13-1 for general guidance as to the size of the guard force for a given echelon.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF A GUARD FORCE**

**13-61.** Whether the guard is for a stationary (defending) or moving (attacking) force, the various types of guard missions and knowledge of the terrain and enemy, dictate the

specific task organization of the guard force. The guard force commander normally plans to conduct the guard mission as an area defense (Chapter 10), a delay (Chapter 12), a zone reconnaissance (see FM 100-55, Combined Arms Reconnaissance), or a movement to contact (Chapter 5) mission with the security area.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**13-62.** The commander uses graphics to control the operations of his guard force within the security area. The assigned mission also influences the size of the area of operations given to subordinate elements. For example, a movement to contact normally takes place across a narrower frontage than the same unit making a zone reconnaissance to allow adequate concentration of combat power.

**13-63.** The guard force may assign its own subordinate elements to conduct screen missions to the front and flanks of the guard force. This provides early warning of enemy forces and helps maintain contact with flank forces and any higher-echelon security force. An example of the latter would be a corps covering force operating in front of a division advance guard. The presence of a higher-echelon security force also influences how the guard force commander organizes his force and conducts operations.

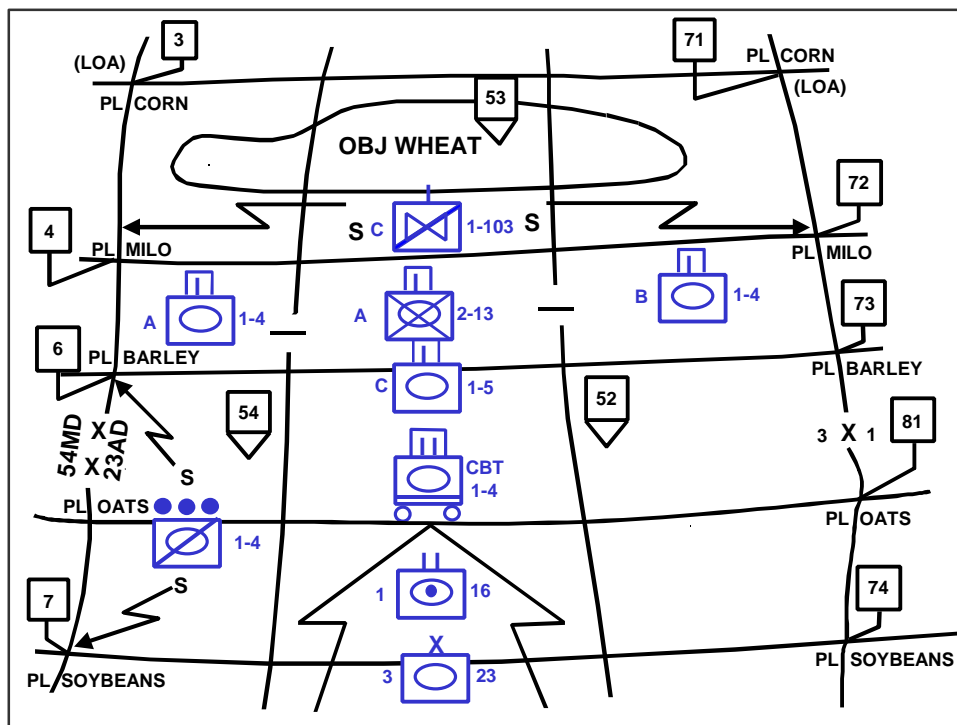


Figure 13-9. Advance Guard for a Division Shaping Attack

## ADVANCE GUARD

**13-64.** An advance guard for a stationary force is defensive in nature. It defends or delays in accordance with the intent of the main body commander. An advance guard for a moving force is offensive in nature. (See Figure 13-9.) The advance guard develops the situation so the main body can use its combat power to the greatest effect. The main body's combat power must not be dissipated through piecemeal commitment. The full combat power of the main body must be available immediately to defeat the main enemy force.

**13-65.** An advance guard for a moving force normally conducts a movement to contact. It organizes and uses the graphics of a movement to contact. (See Chapter 5.) Ground subordinate elements of a guard are normally deployed abreast to cover the axis of advance or the main body's area of operations.

**13-66.** The advance guard is responsible for clearing the axis of advance or designated portions of the area of operations of enemy elements. This allows the main body to move unimpeded, prevents the unnecessary delay of the main body, and defers the deployment of the main body for as long as possible.

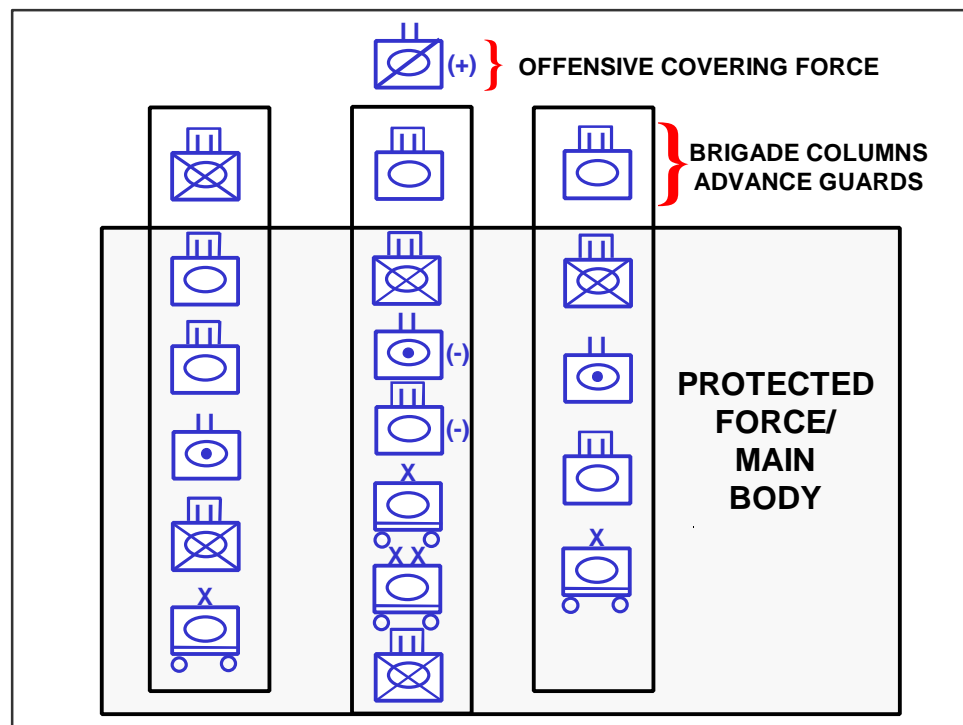


Figure 13-10. Example of Multiple Security Forces

**13-67.** The advance guard may operate behind the security force of a higher echelon. For example, a division may use its cavalry squadron (reinforced) as an offensive covering force while each subordinate brigade column organizes one of its battalion task forces into an advance guard. (See Figure 13-10.) In these situations, the higher-echelon security force will initially develop the situation. A commander may task the advance guard to:

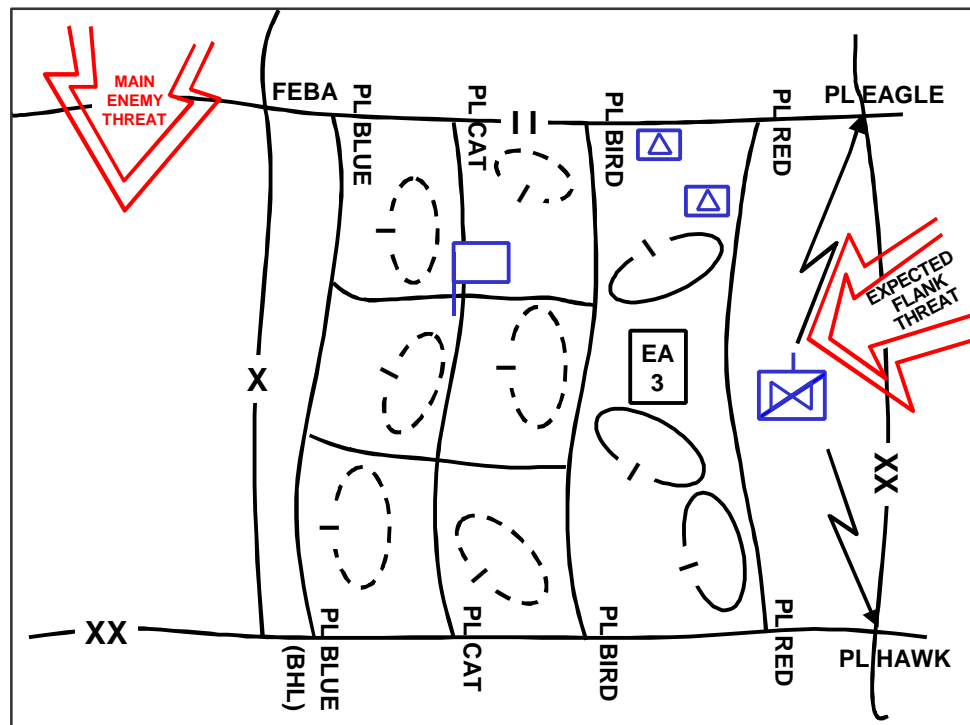
- Eliminate enemy forces bypassed by the covering force.
- Reduce obstacles to create lanes or improve existing lanes as required to support the maneuver of the main body.
- Coordinate and conduct the rearward passage of lines of the covering force.
- Coordinate and conduct a forward passage of lines through the covering force and fix enemy forces in the enemy's main defensive positions to allow the friendly main body to maneuver.

**13-68.** The movement of multiple security forces and the handoff of a detected enemy force from the higher-echelon security force to the lower-echelon security force is controlled using phase lines, checkpoints, and other graphic control measures. As a minimum, the covering force has a rear boundary that is also the forward boundary of the advance guard.

**13-69.** The advance guard engages in offensive operations when necessary to accomplish the mission. After the guard makes enemy contact, the commander determines whether the guard mission requires an attack, a defense, or a delay based on the factors of METT-TC. For example, if the guard force has sufficient combat power to defeat an enemy, it may conduct a hasty attack or defend from its current location. The guard force will not assault strong enemy positions from the front if this can be avoided. The advance guard then destroys the withdrawing enemy force as it exposes itself by moving to other positions. If the advance guard encounters an enemy force that it cannot stop from interfering with the movement of the main body, the security force reports its presence to the main body. It then establishes a defense, continues reconnaissance operations, and prepares to pass elements of the main body forward while facilitating the deployment of the main body.

**13-70.** If the guard force does not have enough combat power to defeat an approaching enemy and the depth of the security area permits, the commander can delay back one or more positions before becoming decisively engaged. This reduces the enemy's combat power. Unless the security force is relieved of the guard mission, it must, at some point, accept decisive engagement to prevent enemy ground forces from using direct fires to engage the main body.

**13-72.** The commander of the main body designates the general location of the flank guard's positions. Areas of operation assigned to the flank guard should be sufficiently deep to provide early warning and reaction time. However, flank guards must remain within supporting range of the main body. To determine the guard force's exact initial positions, the flank guard commander considers the front and rear of the flank of the main body, the axis taken by the main body, the enemy's capabilities, and the available avenues of approach.



**13-73.** The flank guard moves to its initial positions using one of the techniques discussed in “Movement During Moving Security Mission.” Upon reaching the initial positions, the flank guard establishes defensive positions in assigned battle positions or within its assigned AO and establishes a screening element forward of these positions. (See Figure 13-11.) In situations where knowledge of the enemy is vague, the flank

guard maintains a larger reserve than in situations where the enemy's actions are more predictable.

**13-74.** Once the flank guard makes contact with the enemy, it can attack; defend to defeat or fix enemy ground forces in their current positions before they can engage the main body; or conduct a delay as required by the situation.

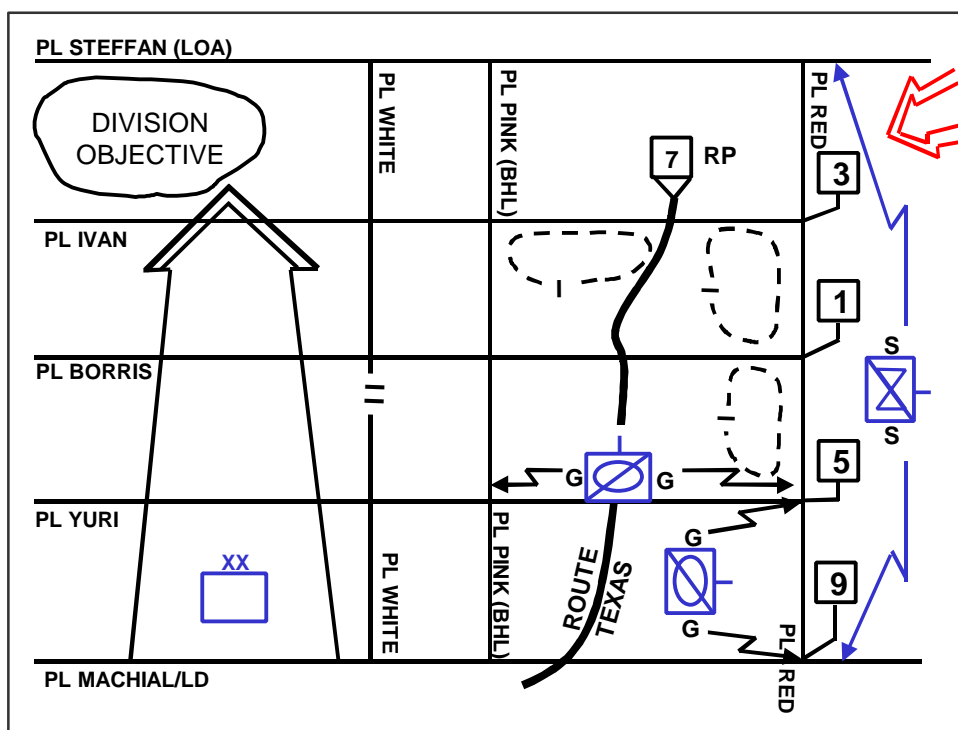
**13-75.** A commander must address additional considerations beyond those applying to the conduct of a moving flank screen in the conduct of a moving flank guard. Instead of occupying a series of OPs, the security force plans a series of battle positions. The tasks associated with a guard mission apply to a moving flank guard. However, the number and location of echelon-specific avenues of approach over which the security force maintains continuous surveillance change as the main body moves. The security force monitors potential enemy avenues of approach for as long as they threaten the main body.

**13-76.** The lead element of a moving flank guard must accomplish three tasks. It must maintain contact with the protected force's main body, reconnoiter the area between that main body and the flank guard's routes of advance, and reconnoiter the flank guard's route. It accomplishes these tasks by conducting a zone reconnaissance. The speed of the main body determines how thoroughly it can carry out the reconnaissance. The exact size of the AO for any given unit conducting a guard is METT-TC dependent. For example, as a general rule, on typical central European terrain, an AO wider than 10 kilometers from the guard line to the boundary of the main body should not be assigned to a company or troop since an organization of this size quickly finds itself unable to match the movement of the main body. When the distance from the guard line to the main body boundary exceeds 10 kilometers, the commander of the flank security element should use two or more company-size elements abreast. This ensures that the element making contact with the main body is not overtasked and can match the tempo of the main body. An air cavalry troop may maintain contact with the main body, or a following ground element may perform route reconnaissance along the flank guard's route of advance. Under these conditions, the lead security element does not reconnoiter battle positions or occupy them unless required when contact is made.

**13-77.** The rest of the flank guard marches along the route of advance and occupies battle positions as necessary. Criteria for the route are the same as in a moving flank screen. The commander designates company-size battle positions parallel to the axis of the main body. He places these battle positions outside the flank guard's route of ad-

vance and along avenues of approach into the flank guard. The flank guard occupies observation posts along a screen line forward of the battle position.

**13-78.** Since the flank guard is moving in one direction and orienting on providing protection to the secured force in another direction, the flank guard commander plans control measures to facilitate this dual orientation. These control measures are normally associated with the moving screen, as well as phase lines that run parallel to the direction of movement of the main body. The commander uses these phase lines to control the delay or defense if the enemy attacks from the flank being protected. (See Figure 13-12.) The commander may also assign the flank guard an objective that secures the flank for the main body's objective or otherwise serves to orient its security efforts.



**Figure 13-12. Example of Moving Flank Guard Control Measures**

**13-79.** The flank guard regulates its movement along the route of advance by the pace of the main body, the distance to the objective, and the enemy situation. The three methods of movement are successive bounds, alternate bounds, or continuous marching. (See Chapter 14.) If the main body stops, the flank guard occupies blocking positions. As the speed of the main body changes, the flank guard changes its movement methods.

The guard commander must not allow the force to fall behind the main body or present a lucrative target by remaining stationary along the route.

**13-80.** If the flank guard becomes overextended, the guard commander informs the main body commander and recommends one of the following courses of action:

- Reinforce the flank guard.
- Reduce the flank guards' area of responsibility.
- Screen a portion of the area and guard the rest.

## REAR GUARD

**13-81.** The rear guard protects the exposed rear of the main body. This occurs during offensive operations when the main body breaks contact with flanking forces or during retrograde operations. The commander may deploy a rear guard behind both moving and stationary main bodies. The rear guard for a moving force displaces to successive battle positions along phase lines or delay lines in depth as the main body moves. The nature of enemy contact determines the exact movement method or combination of methods used in the displacement (successive bounds, alternate bounds, and continuous marching).

**13-82.** During retrograde operations, the rear guard normally deploys its ground maneuver elements abreast, behind the main body's forward maneuver units, generally across the entire area of operation. After the main body conducts a rearward passage of lines, the rear guard accepts battle handover and then defends or delays. Alternatively, the rear guard may conduct a relief in place as part of a deception plan or to take advantage of the best defensive terrain. In both cases, the rear guard establishes passage points and assists the rearward passage of the main body, if necessary. The rear guard accomplishes its defensive mission in the same way as any other guard operation after the main body clears the security area. As the main body moves, the rear guard moves to subsequent phase lines in depth. Contact with the enemy may eventually be lost if the enemy does not follow the retrograding friendly force. Fighting a defense or a delay is necessary if the enemy detects the movement and attacks. Chapter 12 discusses retrograde operations.

## COVER

**13-83. Cover is a form of security operations whose primary task is to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body.**



**13-84.** A covering force operates outside supporting range of the main body to promote early situational development as it deceives the enemy about the location of the MBA while disrupting and destroying his forces. This provides the main body with the maximum early warning and reaction time. The distance forward of the main body depends on the intentions and instructions of the main body commander, the terrain, the location and strength of the enemy, and the rates of march of both the main body and the covering force. The width of the covering force area is the same as the AO of the main body.

**13-85.** Unlike a screening or guard force, a covering force is self-contained and capable of operating independently of the main body. A covering force, or portions of it, often becomes decisively engaged with enemy forces. Therefore, the covering force must have substantial combat power to engage the enemy and accomplish its mission. A covering force develops the situation earlier than a screen or a guard. It fights longer and more often and defeats larger enemy forces.

**13-86.** While a covering force provides more security than a screen or guard, it also requires more resources. Before assigning a cover mission, the main body commander must ensure that he has sufficient combat power to resource a covering force and the decisive operation. When the commander lacks the resources to support both, he must assign his security force a less resource-intensive security mission, either a screen or a guard.

**13-87.** A covering force accomplishes all the tasks of screening and guard forces. A covering force for a stationary force performs a defensive mission while a covering force for a moving force generally conducts offensive actions. A covering force normally operates forward of the main body in the offense or defense or to the rear for a retrograde operation. Unusual circumstances could dictate a flank covering force, but this is normally a screen or guard mission.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF A COVERING FORCE**

**13-88.** Whether the cover is for a stationary (defending) or moving (attacking) force, the various types of cover missions, as well as knowledge of the terrain and enemy, dictate the specific task organization of the covering force. The covering force commander normally plans to conduct the cover mission as an area defense (Chapter 10), a delay (Chapter 12), a zone reconnaissance (see FM 100-55), or a movement to contact (Chapter 5) mission within the security area.

**13-89.** The commander normally assigns subordinate units one of these missions or the mission of screen or guard. The covering force uses those organizations and control measures associated with these missions. In addition, the commander establishes those control measures necessary for the conduct of the covering force's passage of lines (forward and rearward). (See Chapter 16.)

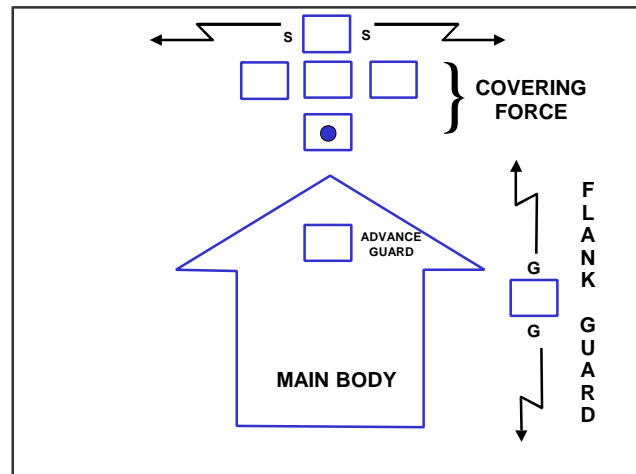
**13-90.** Although any mobile force may be deployed as a covering force, the corps covering force is normally built around the armored cavalry regiment or a division. Both have the command and control structure necessary for the forces involved and the capability to cover the geographical area typically required in a cover security mission. The corps commander tailors this unit to be self-contained by reinforcing it with assets, such as attack helicopters, field artillery, engineers, air defense, tank, and infantry units with appropriate CSS to sustain the resulting force. A covering force is usually allocated additional artillery and engineer support beyond that normally given to a force of its size because it is operating beyond the main body's supporting range. The covering force commander normally maintains a sizable reserve to conduct counterattacks in the defense and to defeat enemy counterattacks in the offense.

**13-91.** A division covering force is normally a reinforced brigade, often with the divisional cavalry squadron as part of the covering force to perform reconnaissance or other security missions. If the division area of operations is narrow enough, an adequately reinforced cavalry squadron may perform a cover mission. At both corps and division echelons, the amount of reinforcement provided to the covering force determines the distance and time it can operate away from the main body. These reinforcements typically revert to their parent organizations upon passage of the covering force. Brigades and battalions typically organize a guard force instead of a covering force because their resources are limited.

**13-92.** Since one task of the covering force is to deceive the enemy into thinking he has found the main body, the commander should supply the covering force with combat systems that are representative of the main body. For example, if the main body has organic or reinforcing systems, such as MLRS available to it, then the commander should organize the covering force with the same systems.

## OFFENSIVE COVER

**13-93.** An offensive covering force seizes the initiative early for the main body commander, allowing him to attack decisively. A main body with an advance covering force and a flank guard is shown in Figure 13-13.



**Figure 13-13. Attack Using a Covering Force**

**13-94.** Unless the commander orders otherwise,

an offensive covering force performs specific tasks within its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the mission, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance and security forces in the enemy security area, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. Offensive covering force tasks:

- Perform zone reconnaissance along the main body's axis of advance or within the AO.
- Clear or bypass enemy forces within the area of operations in accordance with bypass criteria.
- Deny the enemy information about the strength, composition, and objective of the main body.

**13-95.** Covering tasks against a defending enemy:

- Penetrate the enemy's security zone to locate enemy main defensive positions.
- Determine enemy strengths and dispositions.
- Locate gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's defensive scheme.
- Defeat or repel enemy forces as directed by the higher commander.
- Deceive the enemy into thinking the main body has been committed and cause him to launch counterattacks prematurely.
- Fix enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strength or through weaknesses.

**13-96.** In a meeting engagement, covering tasks:

- Destroy enemy reconnaissance, the advance guard, and the lead elements of the main body.
- Determine the location of enemy assailable flanks.

- Fix enemy forces to allow the main body to maneuver around enemy strength or through weaknesses.

**13-97.** Planning for offensive covering force operations is similar to planning for zone reconnaissance or movement to contact. Mission analysis using the products of the IPB process helps determine the width of the area to cover and areas (NAIs and TAIs) or routes of special importance. The commander determines specific missions for subordinate elements and assigns boundaries. The covering force commander retains a reserve, which is ready to deploy anywhere in the covering force zone. This reserve may be centrally located; it typically locates itself on the most dangerous or critical avenue of approach in the security area.

**13-98.** The covering force advances on a broad front, normally with its subordinate ground maneuver elements abreast (except for the reserve). This force should clear the enemy's security area of small combat elements while penetrating into the enemy's main defenses. Air cavalry normally reconnoiters forward of advancing ground covering force elements. Upon enemy contact, the air cavalry reports the enemy's location to the appropriate ground unit and maintains contact. Once contact is made, the covering force rapidly develops the situation. It reports enemy dispositions immediately to the main body commander so that he can exploit enemy weaknesses. The covering force fixes encountered enemy forces and destroys them using fire and movement. The covering force does not bypass enemy forces without the permission of the main body commander.

**13-99.** If the covering force discovers a gap in the enemy's defenses, it prepares to exploit the weakness and disrupt the integrity of that defense. The covering force commander immediately reports this to the main body commander so that he can divert main body follow-on forces to support the penetration. The main body commander synchronizes the penetration by the covering force with the arrival of other maneuver units, CS, and CSS to prevent counterattacking enemy forces from isolating and destroying the penetrating elements of the covering force.

**13-100.** When the covering force can advance no further, it defends and prepares to assist the forward passage of lines of main body units. It continues to perform reconnaissance of enemy positions to locate gaps or assailable flanks. The covering force may guide main body units as they attack through or around the covering force. If the covering force has accomplished its mission, the main body commander will be able

to attack the enemy's weak point with previously uncommitted main body forces when he determines the timing is right.

## FLANK COVER

**13-101.** A flank covering force mission is normally assigned if the main body commander perceives a significant threat to one of his flanks. The flank covering force is conducted in much the same way as a flank guard. The main differences between the two missions are the scope of operations and the distance the covering force operates away from the main body.

**13-102.** Just as in a flank guard, the flank covering force must clear the area between its route of advance and the main body. It must also maintain contact with an element of the main body specified by the main body commander. This element is normally part of the advance guard for the flank unit of the main body.

## DEFENSIVE COVER

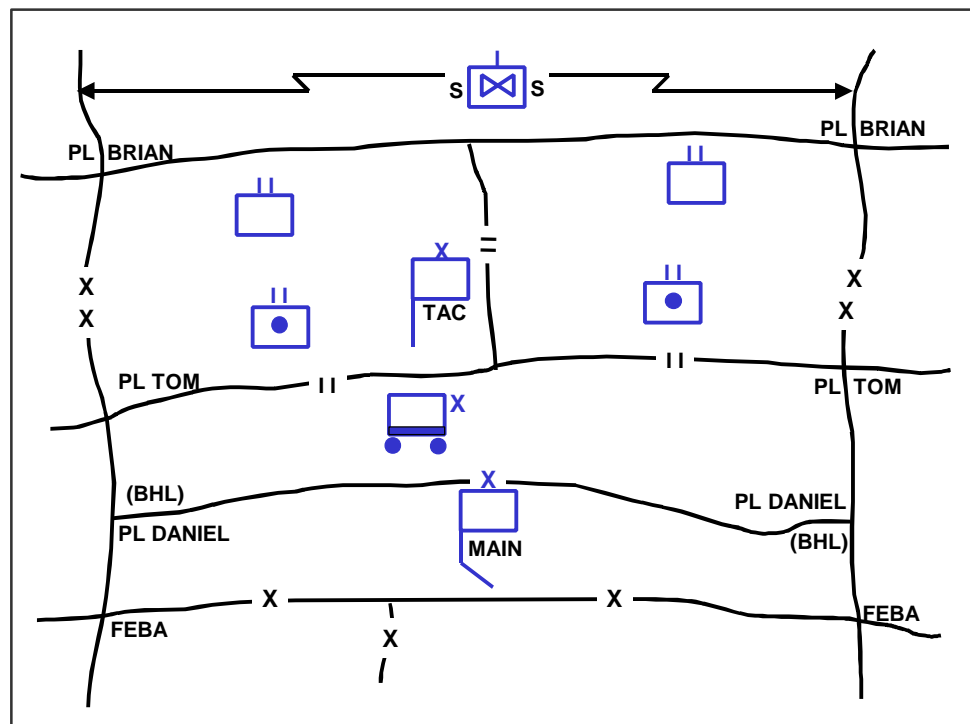


Figure 13-14. Generic Depiction of a Defensive Cover

**13-103.** A defensive covering force prevents the enemy from attacking at the time, place, and combat strength of his choosing. (See Figure 13-14.) Defensive cover is intended to gain time for the main body, enabling it to deploy, move, or prepare defenses in the main battle area (MBA). It accomplishes this by disrupting the enemy's attack,

destroying his initiative, and establishing the conditions for decisive operations. The covering force makes the enemy deploy repeatedly to fight through the covering force and commit his reserve or follow-on forces to sustain momentum.

**13-104.** Unless the commander orders otherwise, a defensive covering force performs certain tasks within its capabilities. If a unit does not have the time or other resources to complete all of these tasks, it must inform the commander assigning the mission of the shortfall and request guidance on which tasks to complete or the priority of tasks. After starting the mission, if the unit determines that it cannot complete an assigned task, such as defeat enemy advance guard formations, it must report this to the commander and await further instructions. A defensive covering force emphasizes the following tasks:

- Prevent the main body from being surprised and becoming engaged by direct fire weapons.
- Maintain continuous surveillance of high-speed avenues of approach into the security area.
- Defeat all enemy reconnaissance formations before they can observe the main body.
- Defeat enemy advanced guard formations.
- Cause the deployment of the enemy main body.
- Determine the size, strength, composition, and direction of the enemy's main effort.
- Destroy, defeat, or attrit enemy forces within its capacity.
- Deprive the enemy of his fire support and air defense umbrellas or require him to displace them before he attacks the main battle area (MBA).
- Deceive the enemy regarding the location of main body and main defensive positions.
- Does not allow itself to be bypassed.

**13-105.** The defensive covering force may be required to defend, delay, or counterattack. If the covering force area is not occupied, the force may have to reconnoiter and clear the area before establishing the cover. As in offensive operations, aerial reconnaissance is necessary to extend the area covered. Aviation units can screen less threatened areas and rapidly reinforce with their fires when other elements of the covering force are heavily engaged.

**13-106.** Whatever the command relationships may be at the outset, as the defensive covering force battle progresses, the covering force will be forced back toward the main battle area. At this time, some or all of the covering force units will fall under the control of the brigades charged with the defense of the MBA. Once the defensive covering force completes its mission, ground maneuver task forces reinforcing the covering force can do one of three things either separately or in combination. They can take up positions

tions in the MBA, undergo reconstitution, or become part of the echelon reserve. The commander may use cavalry and other reconnaissance elements from the covering force as flank or rear security forces. Alternatively, he may use them to locate and follow the movement of the enemy's follow-on forces. They only establish battle positions in the MBA as a last resort.

**13-107.** With its need to transfer responsibility for the battle between units, passage of lines is inherent to a defensive cover. The commander must thoroughly plan this complex task as an integral part of the covering force mission. Passage of lines may not occur simultaneously for all covering force units. As some units begin passage, others may still be taking advantage of offensive opportunities in other parts of the security area. The covering force commander prepares to continue fighting in those portions of the security area where his forces are successful in order to set up offensive opportunities for the main body.

**13-108.** The covering force commander must exercise caution when issuing orders within the covering force. Commanders at each echelon will have a different perspective of the battle. This is never truer than in a covering force action. For example, while the covering force commander may be told to delay forward of a river line for 72 hours, he may tell his task force commanders to defend in certain battle positions, perhaps for a specified period of time. Once the time period expires, the covering force should not automatically retire from the covering force area. It must create enough resistance to force the enemy to deploy his main forces. Commanders at each echelon must precisely state the mission to their subordinate commanders without telling them how to do it. (This is mission command, see FM 100-34.) All too often, a small-unit commander, when told to delay, yields to an urge to *shoot too little, pull back too early, and move back too far*. Thus, it is imperative that each commander conveys to his subordinates precisely what their mission is in the context of the overall mission. Within a covering force, company teams and troops are mainly involved in a series of defensive operations, which are described in orders and instructions.

## AREA SECURITY

**13-109.** Area security is a form of security operations conducted to protect friendly forces, installations, routes, and actions within a specific area. Area security operations may be offensive or defensive in nature. They focus on the force, installation, route, or

area to be protected. Forces to protect range from echelon head-quarters, through artillery and echelon reserves, to the sustaining base. Protected installations can also be part of the sustaining base or they can constitute part of the area's infrastructure. Areas to secure range from specific points (bridges and defiles) and terrain features (ridge lines and hills) to large population centers and their adjacent areas.

**13-110.** The increased size of the area of operations in noncontiguous operations requires more emphasis on area security. During offensive and retrograde operations, the speed at which the main body moves provides some measures of security. Rapidly moving units in open terrain can rely on technical assets to provide advance warning of enemy forces. In restrictive terrain, security forces focus on key terrain such as potential choke points.

**13-111.** A commander executes area security as part of an echelon's sustaining operations responsibilities or as part of stability and support actions. Area security includes maintaining security for routes and convoys. During conventional operations, area security operations are normally economy of force measures designed to ensure the continued sustainment of decisive and shaping operations. Area security responsibilities pertaining to stability actions and support actions are discussed in FM 100-20, *Stability Actions and Support Actions*. All area security operations take advantage of the local security measures performed by all units regardless of their location within the area of operations.

**13-112.** If civilians are present in the area of operations, a unit must restrain its use of force when conducting area security operations. However, the commander always remains responsible for protecting his force and considers this responsibility when establishing his rules of engagement. Restrictions on conducting operations and using force must be clearly explained and understood by everyone. Soldiers must understand that their actions, no matter how minor, may have far-reaching positive or negative effects. They must realize that either friendly or hostile media and PSYOP organizations can quickly exploit their actions, especially the manner in which they treat the civilian population.

**13-113.** Sometimes area security forces must retain readiness over long periods of time without contact with the enemy. This occurs most often during area security operations when the enemy knows that he is seriously overmatched in terms of available combat power. In this case, he will normally try to avoid engagement with friendly forces unless it is on his terms. Forces conducting area security should not develop a false sense of security even if the enemy appears to have ceased operations within the secured area.



The commander must assume that the enemy is observing his operations and is seeking routines, weak points, and lax security for the opportunity to strike with minimum risk.

#### SUSTAINMENT AREA SECURITY OPERATIONS

**13-114. *Sustainment area security operations are a specialized kind of area security operations conducted to protect friendly forces, installations, and actions within sustainment areas.*** The success of current operations may hinge on protecting the friendly sustainment area from enemy operations, which can range in size from single saboteurs to large forces, such as airborne or air assault insertions. The enemy attacks by striking into the friendly force's sustainment area with air assets, a mobile force, and stay-behind forces (when appropriate) or by infiltrating combat elements around and through friendly forces. The enemy looks for opportunities to disrupt friendly lines of communications (LOC). Enemy operations that target key units, facilities, and capabilities may precede the formal commencement of hostilities. The lowest echelon with a designated sustainment area is normally a brigade. A brigade or higher-echelon commander may assign battalion and lower-echelon units the mission of securing his sustainment area. Every echelon from brigade to a joint task force appoints a sustainment operations officer as part of its standing operating procedures. Usually this is the echelon executive officer or a deputy commander. This officer is responsible for the detection and defeat of enemy forces planning to interrupt the echelon's sustainment effort. He designs his activities to assure freedom of maneuver and the continued sustainment of the force.

**13-115.** Stationary forces are at the greatest risk during sustainment area security operations. They should employ a combination of static and mobile security forces. Mobile forces can conduct security operations while static forces can provide the required local security. Units should move frequently to prevent the enemy from planning an attack on their position. After leaving an area, units can leave stay-behind forces or covert observation posts to determine if an opposing force is targeting them.

**13-116.** Enemy attempts to interdict sustainment lines of communications may have little immediate impact on ongoing decisive and shaping operations because of previously positioned caches and unit basic loads. However, sustainment operations are critical to subsequent friendly operations, regardless of whether the commander is attempting to exploit success or recoup failure. At the tactical level, sustainment operations sustain the tempo of combat, assuring the commander the agility to take advantage of any opportunity without hesitation or delay.

**13-117.** Three levels of enemy activity describe the enemy encountered during sustainment area security operations. A Level I threat describes small enemy forces that can be defeated by CS and CSS units operating in the sustainment area or by the perimeter defenses established by friendly bases and base clusters. In a typical base, the Level I threat consists of a squad-size unit or smaller groups of enemy soldiers, agents, or terrorists. Typical objectives for a Level I threat include supplying themselves from friendly supply stocks; disrupting friendly C<sup>2</sup>, logistics, and facilities; and interdicting friendly lines of communication.

**13-118.** A Level II threat is enemy activities that can be defeated by a base or base cluster augmented by a response force. A typical response force is an MP platoon; however, it can be a combat arms maneuver element. Level II threats consist of enemy special operations teams, long-range reconnaissance units, mounted or dismounted combat reconnaissance teams, and other partially attrited small combat units. Typical objectives for a Level II threat include the destruction, as well as the disruption, of friendly C<sup>2</sup> and logistics and commercial facilities and the interdiction of friendly lines of communication.

**13-119.** A Level III threat is beyond the defensive capability of both the base and base cluster and any local reserve or response force. It normally consists of a mobile enemy force. The friendly response to a Level III threat is a tactical combat force. Possible objectives for this force include the seizure of key terrain, interference with the movement and commitment of reserves and artillery, and destruction of friendly combat forces. Its objectives could also include the destruction of friendly CSS facilities, supply points, command post facilities, airfields, aviation assembly areas, arming and refueling points, and the interdiction of major supply routes.

#### **Organization of Forces for Sustainment Area Security Operations**

**13-120.** As in all area security missions, sustainment area security operations are normally the domain of small units. Usually, a force responsible for providing sustainment area security requires some reorganization because of the terrain, nature of the enemy, and other factors of METT-TC, such as the specific civil and military situations. The organization of forces in a sustainment area security operation also differs depending on the way the commander plans to accomplish his mission. The preferred way to conduct a sustainment area security mission is as an offensive operation designed to clear the area of enemy forces. However, the sustainment operations officer may be forced to adopt a primarily defensive posture because of the:

- Size of the assigned area of operations.
- Lack of resources.

- Inability to detect and track the enemy.
- Enemy's capabilities in relation to the friendly force's capabilities

**13-121.** The sustainment operations officer task-organizes his forces into combined arms elements to counter the level of enemy capabilities as determined by his intelligence assets. This enables him to find the enemy with the smallest possible element, maintain contact without risking the destruction of the element in contact before it can receive outside support, and mass his combat power rapidly to destroy the detected enemy.

**13-122.** The basic building blocks used in task organizing for sustainment area security operations are infantry, armor, and military police companies and armored cavalry troops. The commander should strive to obtain tactical self-sufficiency within these organizations. He can do this by attaching or placing in direct support adequate fire support, CS, and CSS elements so that they can perform semi-independent operations. Also, he must obtain resources, such as civil affairs, psychological operations, and interpreters, for interacting with the civilian inhabitants of the area being secured.

**13-123.** Maneuver battalions provide the CSS needed to keep sustainment area, company-size security forces in the field. Brigade and group headquarters, as well as higher-echelon headquarters, provide the required command and control structure to conduct sustainment area security operations for a prolonged period. Brigade and group headquarters coordinate with their higher headquarters and host nation counterparts and civilian agencies through their Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC). They also allocate additional available resources to their subordinate battalion task forces. A brigade or larger force conducting sustainment area security operations can expect the following assets to be available:

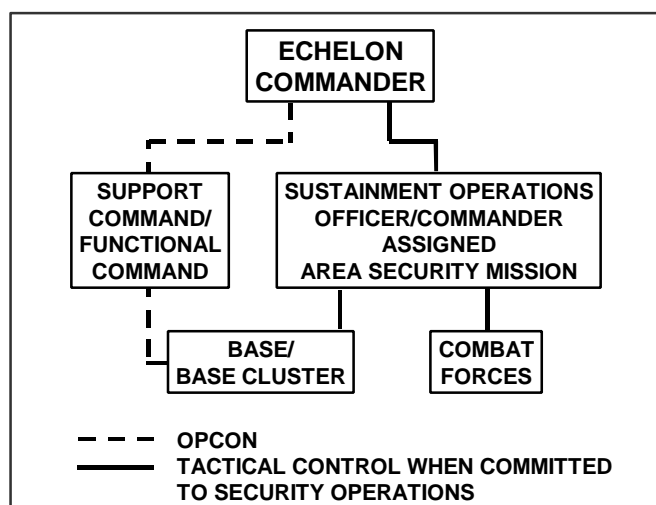
- Military police with working dogs.
- Mounted combat forces (armor, armored cavalry, and mechanized infantry).
- Dismounted combat forces (light, airborne, or air assault infantry).
- Military intelligence (includes counterintelligence).
- Field artillery.
- Engineers.
- Army aviation (attack, air cavalry, air assault, command and control, and possibly special electronic mission aircraft).
- Public affairs.
- Air defense artillery.
- Area signal nodes.
- Civil affairs assisted by PSYOP elements.
- CSS elements (AG, finance, JAG, medical, ordnance, quartermaster, and transportation) required to sustain the force conducting area security.

The force conducting the sustainment area security mission may also receive support from other US and allied services, which includes the host nation.

**13-124.** Special operations forces (SOF) other than civil affairs and PSYOP may conduct a counterterrorism operation within the area of operations of a conventional unit. The unit conducting the sustainment area security mission will probably be tasked by a higher headquarters to provide conventional support to the SOF element conducting counterterrorism operations within its AO. If SOF operate in the area, a special operations cell coordination element (SOCCE) will normally be deployed at the corps or ARFOR, with liaisons attached lower for a specific mission to the unit responsible for the appropriate area of operations for the duration of the SOF mission.

#### *Base Organization*

**13-125.** To nullify or reduce the effectiveness of enemy attack, all units located in the sustainment area not actively involved in offensive operations are either assigned to a base or they establish a base. A base is a unit or multiunit position that has a definite perimeter. The base commander is the senior



**Figure 13-16. OPCON versus TACON in Sustainment Area Security Operations**

Army competitive category officer within the base. He establishes a base defense operations center that operates around the clock to support the tactical chain of command. The tactical chain of command protects command and control facilities, artillery, the movement of reserves, and the sustaining base in the area being protected. The technical chain of command controls the support efforts of all CS and CSS units. It ensures the continuation of forward support to the forward combat units. (See Figure 13-16.)

**13-126.** The base commander plans, prepares, and supervises the base's local security efforts to protect base personnel, equipment, and resources from enemy attack. He uses all assets within the base's perimeter to create the required level of local security, such as perimeter defensive positions and local security patrols. These assets include crews, weapons systems, and radios of combat vehicles temporarily located on the base for maintenance or other reasons. The base commander ensures that all base personnel possess basic marksmanship skills and know basic fire and movement techniques; both

are critical in establishing a viable defensive perimeter. He prepares the base's defense plan and conducts rehearsals on implementing the plan for all base personnel and units. He creates a reaction force to augment the base's defensive posture. This reaction force provides additional internal security within the base. Only under extreme circumstances will he commit a base defense reaction force to support assets outside the base.

**13-127.** The base commander locates his base in a location that will enhance its physical security. The echelon sustainment operations officer must approve the location. The base commander uses a combination of active and passive defensive measures to deter or defeat low-level enemy threats. The base's defensive capability is the cornerstone of the economy of force aspects of the sustainment area security mission. The base commander gains mutual support from units in or near his location. When the enemy's capabilities exceed the defensive capability of the base, he also coordinates with security forces outside the base for additional security support beyond the base's organic defensive capabilities. Prior coordination with outside security forces increases the effectiveness of that support. Coordination should include communications interface, estimation of the size and capabilities of the Level II and III response forces provided by security forces from outside the base, and how and where those external response forces should position to support the base.

#### *Base Cluster Organization*

**13-128.** When bases are geographically grouped so that they are capable of providing mutual support, the sustainment operations officer organizes a base cluster. The senior officer in each cluster becomes that cluster's commander. Like a base commander, the base cluster commander establishes a continuously operating base cluster operations center to support the tactical chain of command. This individual is normally the commander of a battalion or larger unit so that his staff is responsible for managing the base cluster operations center. He integrates each of the base defense plans into a base cluster defense plan.

**13-129.** Base and base cluster commanders are responsible for the defense of their base or base cluster. They must identify shortages in material or weaknesses in required defensive capabilities early. It is essential to employ all available obstacles, such as wire, demolitions, and claymore antipersonnel mines to defend each base. When units cannot defend themselves, not located in mutually supportive positions, or cannot be adequately defended, they must reposition immediately; any delay can seriously endanger the survival of the unit.

*Tactical Combat Force*

**13-130.** A successful defense against major enemy forces operating in the friendly sustainment area (Level III threat) requires preparing and planning for the employment of a tactical combat force (TCF). The TCF is a dedicated force controlled by the sustainment area commander. The commander can dedicate a TCF to deal with such a threat, designate another force as the on-order TCF, or accept the risk of not having a designated TCF. The primary advantage of having a dedicated TCF over an on-order TCF is the assurance that it will be available when it is needed. Secondary advantages include focusing planning and preparation activities on just one mission. This includes establishing liaison and communications with supported bases/base clusters and echelon Level II response forces. It also allows the dedicated TCF to rehearse its plans. When the commander assigns a subordinate unit an on-order mission of being the TCF, he must establish criteria on when to commit that unit as the TCF.

**13-131.** The TCF is generally a maneuver force assigned the mission of defeating enemy airborne, air assault, or ground attacks. These attacks result from either the enemy infiltrating friendly positions or his forces penetrating friendly defensive positions and moving into the friendly sustainment area. In situations where the threat warrants establishment of a TCF, it is a committed force and the commander allocates combat multipliers, such as artillery and combat engineers, to it. A reserve is not a committed force although it, or a part of it, may be designated as an on-order TCF.

**13-132.** The factors of METT-TC determine the size of the TCF. For a corps or a division this normally results in a battalion task force being assigned the mission. The commander configures his TCF to conduct offensive operations. The TCF must be extremely mobile and capable of moving by air and ground modes because of limited reaction time and extended distances between units common to the sustainment area. The TCF must be at least as mobile as the enemy. It should be capable of destroying armor-protected vehicles and dismounted infantry and of suppressing enemy short-range air defense systems. Consequently, a TCF typically consists of infantry, Army aviation (attack and utility helicopters), and air cavalry elements with engineer and field artillery support. The TCF may also be organized with armored cavalry, armor, and mechanized infantry units if the situation so dictates.

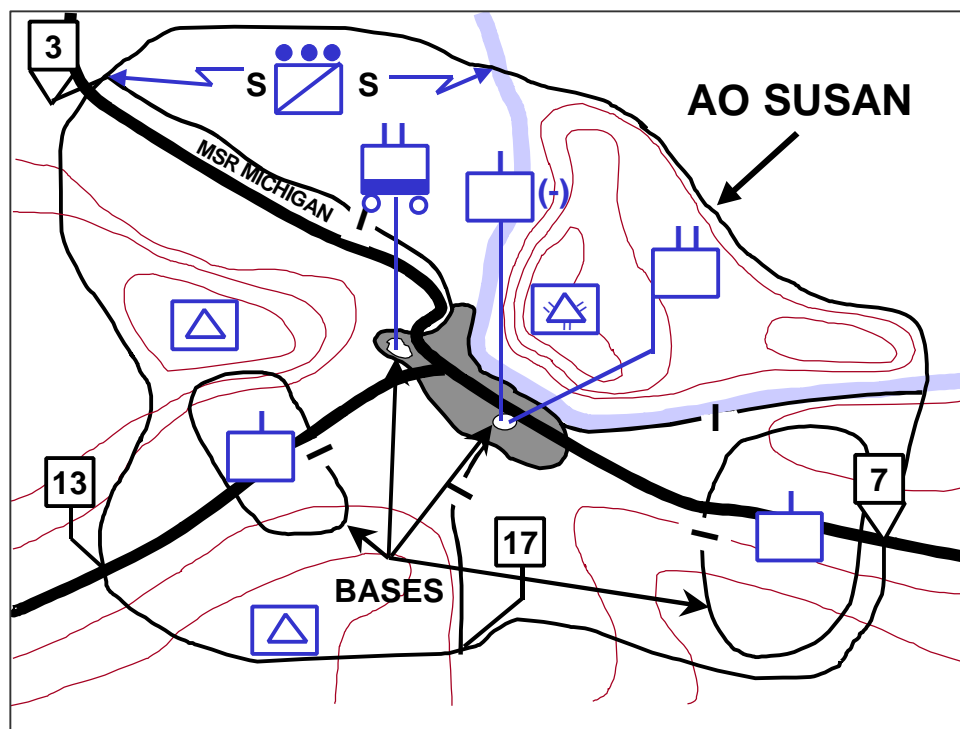


Figure 13-16. Examples of Area Security Graphics

#### Sustainment Area Security Control Measures

**13-133.** The control graphics for a sustainment area security mission are similar to those for a defensive operation. (See 13-16.) The headquarters assigning the area security mission designates the security force's area of operations using rear, lateral, and forward boundaries. The area of operations may or may not be contiguous to those of other units. The commander may further subdivide his assigned area into subordinate AOs, bases, and base clusters. The commander can assign maneuver forces to assembly areas and battle positions. The commander establishes phase lines, contact points, objectives, and checkpoints as necessary to control his maneuver. He establishes fire coordination measures to take advantage of available fire support. All established control graphics are coordinated with host nation agencies to minimize interference, misunderstandings, and unnecessary collateral damage.

#### Planning for a Sustainment Area Security Mission

**13-134.** In planning for sustainment area security, a simple, flexible maneuver plan disseminated to the lowest level of command is normally the best course of action. The plan should include the maximum use of standing operating procedures (SOPs) and battle drills at the user level. It should incorporate adequate control measures. Fire support

planning and coordination ensure the safety of friendly troops and civilians. Such a plan minimizes the impact of the inevitable miscues that accompany any combat operation.

**13-135.** The factors of METT-TC and unit capabilities determine the specific security element tasks of subordinate units. For example, mounted forces are more suited to secure key points, such as major road junctions, bridges, tunnels, canal locks, dams, and power plants; while dismounted forces are well-suited for securing areas containing restricted terrain or large numbers of civilians.

**13-136.** In the commander's assessment of the factors of METT-TC for the sustainment area security mission, he focuses on the enemy's situation to determine how to organize and conduct the mission. Tactical intelligence is the key to defeating the enemy's operations directed against friendly sustainment operations. It provides the commander with information on current and possible future enemy locations, activities, strengths, weaknesses, and plans, which helps him seize the initiative. The commander should exploit all relevant sources of information within his area of operations, including information provided by civilian agencies and individuals. The IPB process is a vital part of answering the commander's intelligence requirements. These requirements include:

- Size and capabilities of enemy forces within the commander's area of operations.
- Natural defensive characteristics of the terrain.
- Movement corridors throughout the area of operations for both mounted and dismounted operations.
- Conditions of existing roads, railways, pipelines, and waterways for use as both military lines of communication and civilians commerce.
- Proximity of enemy forces to critical facilities and installations, such as airfields, power generation plants, petroleum tank farms, and civic buildings.

**13-137.** The commander should plan to employ only the minimum firepower required to accomplish the sustainment area security mission. While the right to self-defense is never denied, it may be limited in some manner. For example, unlimited use of firepower that negatively affects the civilian population of the area being secured may cause it to embrace the enemy's cause or withhold support to the friendly force. Soldiers must understand this and follow strict rules of engagement when conducting sustainment operations.

**13-138.** In combined or unilateral operations, communications problems can occur during information exchanges. The commander must address the language barrier because units have to communicate with the established governmental agencies or with the populace. The ability to communicate with different agencies and the local populace helps protect the force.



**13-139.** Because of the decentralized nature of sustainment operations activities and the intermingling of military forces and civilians, the commander must address fratricide prevention when planning sustainment area security operations. Fires that miss their intended targets can affect other forces, routes, and installations in the area being secured. When considering a course of action, the commander weighs the risk of fratricide against losses to enemy fire.

**13-140.** Since sustainment area security forces generally operate in close proximity to a sustaining base location, the commander should tailor the load carried by his dismounted elements to the immediate requirements of METT-TC. Resupply of dismounted elements takes place using either ground or air modes.

#### **Conducting a Sustainment Area Security Mission**

**13-141.** Forces engaged in sustainment area security operations must be flexible and able to adapt to rapidly changing tactical situations. Sustainment area security requires units to make swift transitions from reconnaissance to a hasty attack or defense, followed by the exploitation of success and the pursuit of a defeated enemy. The commander's use of rotary wing aircraft and combat and tactical vehicles to support dismounted forces provides a tactical advantage.

**13-142.** During sustainment area security operations, the commander must monitor the location of friendly troops and their relationship to friendly fires. The commander must be constantly aware of the relative location of enemy, friendly, and neutral personnel. Subordinate elements, such as patrols, must understand the importance of accurately reporting their positions. Automation and navigation aids, such as the global positioning system (GPS) tied to combat net radios, assist in maintaining situational awareness. When employing artillery, mortars, and air support, the commander must exercise positive control. Positive control means that an observer must be able to see the target area. Unit SOPs at all levels must address specific procedures for clearing indirect fires directed against targets located within the sustainment area.

**13-143.** Once the sustainment area is established, the sustainment operations officer uses his available resources to initiate an area reconnaissance to determine the physical characteristics of the area and the presence or absence of enemy forces. Since sustainment operations are normally an economy of force measure, it is unlikely that sufficient forces will be available to cover the echelon's entire sustainment area at one time. Therefore, they concentrate on those areas immediately adjacent to the protected element, such as friendly forces. It is essential that base, base cluster, and other sustainment area security forces conduct continuous reconnaissance operations. They

may focus their efforts on people, material, buildings, or terrain. Reconnaissance operations that involve only US forces may not be effective if language problems prevent communication with the local population. In these instances, interpreters — US Army or host nation — should accompany forces conducting reconnaissance. When possible, host nation authorities, such as the civil police, should also accompany the reconnaissance force. Distributing leaflets before or during an area reconnaissance and using loudspeaker teams during the reconnaissance can aid the reconnaissance effort by informing the populace of what information the US reconnaissance force is seeking and how the populace can report that information to US forces.

**13-144.** Area reconnaissance proceeds slowly to allow forces to effectively search the area. However, if it is too slow the enemy force will have time to react. Once the force makes contact with the enemy, it takes offensive action to destroy him, encircling him if possible to prevent a successful exfiltration. The commander should consider sending some of his patrols back to an area after the initial sweep. This can surprise an enemy element that may not have been detected or may have returned.

**13-145.** While units are conducting area reconnaissance, the sustainment operations officer directs units within his area of operations to establish bases and base clusters. These bases and base clusters provide security to units located within them and can provide perimeter security around critical locations. Perimeters vary in shape depending on the factors of METT-TC. The perimeter shape conforms to the terrain features that offer the best use of observation and field of fire. (See Chapter 9 for more information on the perimeter defense.) If a base commander can determine the most probable direction of an enemy attack, he can strengthen that part of the perimeter to cover the approach.

**13-146.** When the sustainment operations officer commits his forces to fixed installations or sites, the sustainment security mission may become defensive in nature. Therefore, he must carefully balance his approach with the need for offensive action. Detecting enemy activity early is critical when conducting sustainment area security; it provides the commander with time to react to any threat. Proper reconnaissance and surveillance planning — coupled with the use of dismounted and mounted patrols and aerial reconnaissance — is key to successful operations.

**13-147.** Sniper teams are useful when forces come under harassing small arms fire by a small enemy element firing from, among, or near areas where civilians or cultural monuments protect it from the return fires of more nondiscriminating weapons. These teams allow the security force commander to fix the enemy. He then moves other elements into positions where they can engage the enemy without endangering civilian

lives or causing excessive collateral damage. The commander can employ smoke and, if authorized, riot-control agents to aid in this maneuver. If the enemy cannot be engaged without endangering civilian life or property, the security force commander can try to disengage his forces and move them to positions that block the enemy's escape routes. However, the commander must use whatever means are available to protect his forces, even though it may place civilians at risk.

## ROUTE SECURITY

**13-148. *Route security operations are a specialized kind of area security operations conducted to protect lines of communications and friendly forces moving along them.*** Units conduct route security missions to prevent enemy ground forces from moving into direct fire range of the protected route. The route and its adjoining terrain compose the area of operations. A route security force operates on and to the flanks of a designated route. While the scope of these operations depends on the factors of METT-TC, route security operations tend to require a large number of soldiers. For example, because of the distances involved, a commander usually assigns at least one battalion-size unit, if not more, to secure one route through a division-size area of operations.

**13-149.** Route security operations are defensive in nature and, unlike guard operations, they are terrain-oriented. A route security force prevents an enemy force from impeding, harassing, or destroying traffic along the route. To accomplish its mission, the security force must accomplish the following tasks:

- Conduct mounted and dismounted reconnaissance of the route and key locations along the route to ensure that it is trafficable and to prevent the emplacement of enemy mines along the route. These reconnaissance sweeps should be conducted at irregular intervals.
- Establish a perimeter around the route or cordon sections of it to search suspected enemy locations while establishing roadblocks and checkpoints along the main route and lateral routes to stop and search vehicles and people upon their entering or leaving the route.
- Occupy key locations and terrain, such as choke points, along or near the route, and, if possible, establish a screen line oriented to prevent the enemy from observing the route and employing direct fire against friendly units using the route.
- Establish covert OPs or ambushes at critical points and aggressively conduct ground and aerial patrols to watch for potential enemy activity.

## CONVOY SECURITY

**13-150. *Convoy security operations are a specialized kind of area security operations conducted to protect convoys.*** Units conduct convoy security operations any time there are not enough friendly forces to continuously secure lines of communication in an area of operations and there is a danger of enemy ground action

against the convoy. The commander may also conduct them in conjunction with route security operations. A convoy security force operates to the front, flanks, and rear of a convoy element moving along a designated route. Convoy security operations are offensive in nature and orient on the force being protected. Chapter 14 discusses convoy movement operations; this section only addresses convoy security concerns.

**13-151.** To protect a convoy, the convoy escort element must accomplish the following critical tasks:

- Reconnoiter the convoy route.
- Clear the route of obstacles or positions from which the enemy could affect movement along the route.
- Provide early warning of enemy presence along the route.
- Prevent the enemy from attacking the convoy.

#### **Organization of a Convoy Escort**

**13-152.** The size of the escort needed to conduct convoy security operations is METT-TC dependent. However, as a general rule, an average-size convoy of 50 vehicles normally requires at least a maneuver company, a MP company, or air defense artillery gun battery to conduct the mission. Failure to provide an escort results in the cargo-hauling capabilities of each transportation unit being reduced to the degree that it must convert cargo vehicles into ad hoc gun trucks and leave other trucks in a motor pool because of drivers being diverted to provide the necessary degree of security.

**13-153.** Cavalry, tank, mechanized infantry units, and MP elements equipped with armored vehicles, (either tracked or wheeled) are well suited to protect a convoy because of their organic reconnaissance capability and combat power. The commander may reinforce the convoy security force with engineers, dedicated air defense, and other assets as required. Usually the convoy's trail party will also provide CSS support to the convoy escort, such as vehicle recovery and medical evacuation. If the convoy's trail element cannot provide that support, then the convoy escort will have to provide its own CSS support. Other METT-TC considerations, such as restrictive terrain and limited time, dictate how aviation assets are used as part of the coordinated effort.

**13-154.** The convoy security force organizes into several elements to accomplish its tasks. (See Figure 13-17.) The forward reconnaissance element or advance guard performs a route reconnaissance forward of the convoy. The security element provides early warning and security to the convoy's flanks and rear. This element can also perform the duties of the escort element. The escort element provides close-in protection to the convoy. It may also provide an immediate response force to assist in repelling or destroying enemy contact. The rear guard prevents an enemy from overrunning the convoy from the rear. It can also act as an immediate response force. Finally, the

reaction element is available to respond to emergencies. It is a committed force, not a reserve. It provides firepower and support to all these convoy elements to assist in developing the situation or in conducting a hasty attack. The headquarters directing the convoy controls this reaction force as opposed to the convoy commander. It monitors the progress of the convoy and responds if the convoy encounters an enemy unit beyond the capability of the escort element to handle. It must be able to respond within 15 minutes. The reaction force always anticipates an ambush when moving to the relief of a convoy under enemy attack.

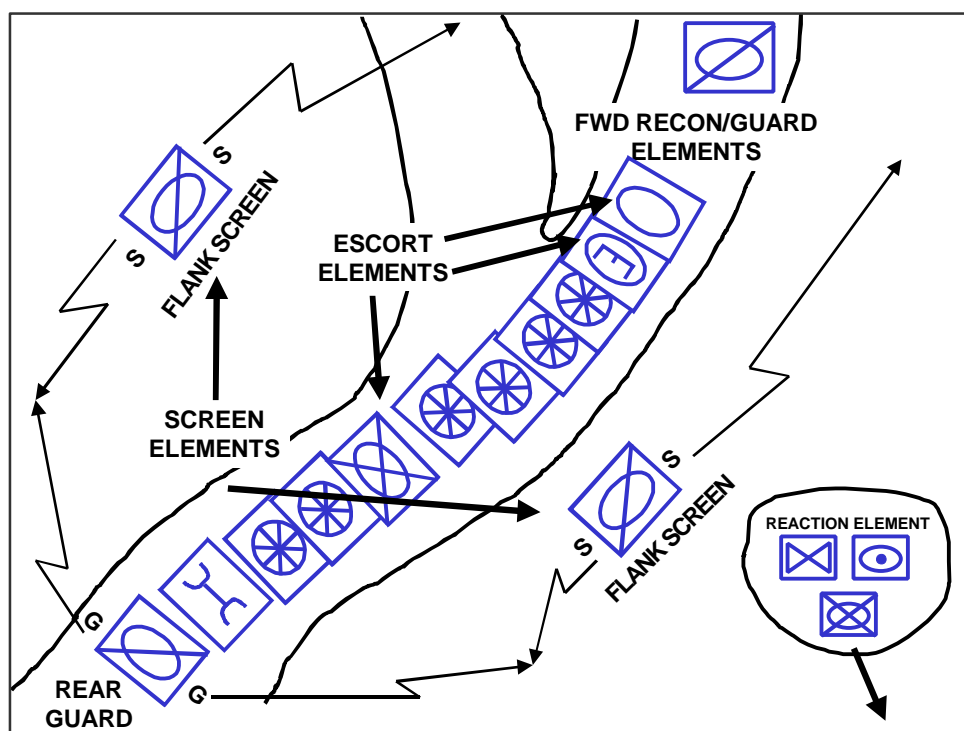


Figure 13-17. Convoy Security Organization

**13-155.** When a lack of resources prevents the establishment of all five elements, the commander normally first resources his forward reconnaissance or advance guard. He then resources his escort, screening, and rear guard elements in that order. It is the responsibility of the headquarters directing the convoy to designate the response element.

**13-156.** If available, air cavalry assets can participate in the convoy security operation by screening the convoy movement as the element moves along the route of march. Alternatively they can assist in clearing the route ahead of the convoy movement as the element moves along the route of march, or clearing the route in conjunction with the route reconnaissance element. Air cavalry can also assist by controlling indirect fire and

coordinating with close air support. The supporting air cavalry unit must know the maneuver intentions of the ground element should contact with the enemy occur. If heavy forces are not available for use as a convoy escort, the commander can use light infantry to augment the self-defense capabilities of transportation units.

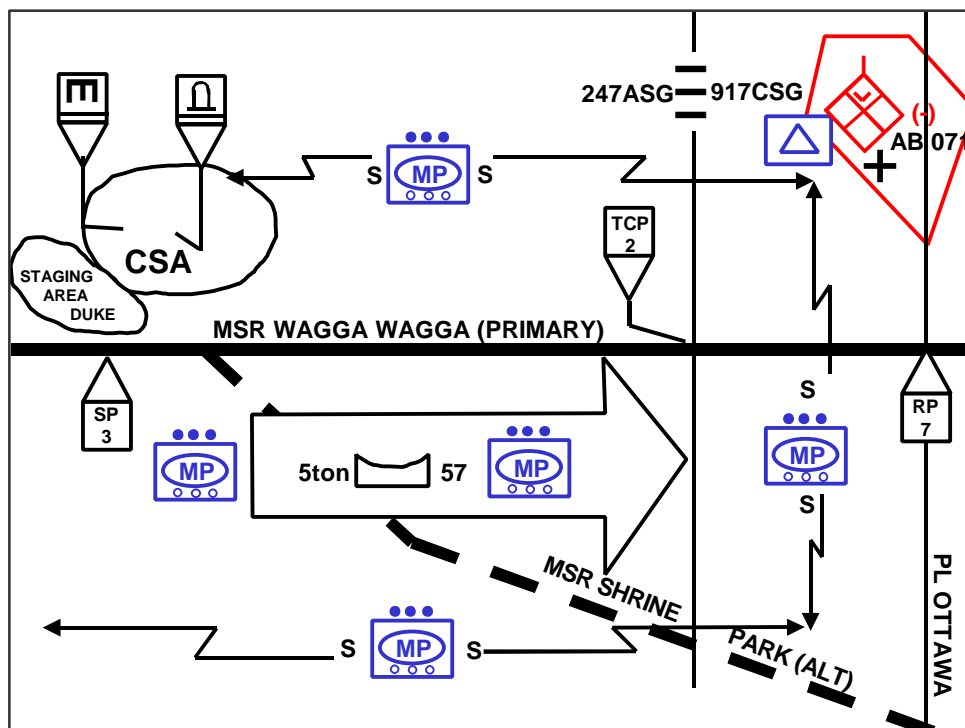


Figure 13-18. Example of Convoy Control Measures

### Convoy Control Measures

**13-157.** As shown in Figure 13-18, the control measures associated with convoy security typically include the following:

- Routes (primary and alternate).
- Start point (SP).
- Release point (RP).
- Checkpoints.
- Phase lines.
- Observation posts.
- Target reference points.
- Areas of operation for various units that affect the convoy.
- Staging or marshalling area(s).
- Know obstacles and lanes.

**13-158.** Although items such as convoy size, passage time, and march speed are not graphical control measures, they determine how long convoy security must be

maintained. Rules of engagement are also not a graphical control measure, but they greatly influence how a commander conducts convoy security operations.

### **Planning for Convoy Operations**

**13-159.** Because of the inherent dangers of convoy operations, the commander emphasizes security measures during the planning process. These security measures include:

- Secrecy when planning and disseminating orders.
- Strict noise and light discipline during movement.
- Varying routes and schedules.
- Avoiding routes with known danger areas.
- Coordinating with supporting air units to ensure an understanding of air support used to assist the movement.
- Fire support elements to provide close and continuous fire support for the movement.
- Training in immediate actions drills to include actions at danger areas and actions in case of a near ambush, a far ambush, booby traps, encounters with enemy tactical combat vehicles, sniper contact, aerial attack, and indirect fire.
- Communications and coordination with supporting units and units along the route, adjacent host-nation forces, and higher headquarters, including airborne radio relay.
- Various locations for leaders, communications, medical support, and weapon systems within the movement formation.
- Questions asked of local civilians along the movement route for intelligence information, including possible enemy ambush sites.

The best defense against an ambush of the convoy is avoidance.

**13-160.** The convoy commander must consider the unique requirements of convoy security when formulating his plan. The commander briefs his convoy commander and his subordinates on the latest information regarding the enemy situation and the area through which the convoy will pass. He formulates his plan and issues his order, which includes the movement formation, intervals between echelons and vehicles, rate of travel, and a detailed plan of action if the convoy encounters an enemy force. Since there is seldom time to issue complicated orders during an ambush, subordinate commanders must plan the actions of the escort element and reaction force in the event of an ambush. Units should rehearse these actions prior to movement and execute them as drills if enemy contact takes place.

**13-161.** Communications are vital to the success of convoy movements. The convoy commander must plan for radio communication and ensure the availability and compatibility of communication means between convoy elements and indirect fire support and air cavalry assets, as well as with units and host nation agencies in areas along the route of movement. The convoy commander prearranges visual and sound

signals, such as colored smoke, identification panels, whistles, or horns. Many of these signals can be standing operating procedures. The convoy commander must ensure that all convoy members understand these signals and rehearse the actions required by each signal. This is necessary because of the limited number of radios and other communications equipment in trucks and other noncombat system vehicles.

**13-162.** The commander plans his fire support for the entire convoy route, especially in the vicinity of potential choke points. Convoy security elements may have mortars organic to the escort element or indirect fires provided by fire support elements positioned to range all or various portions of the route. Coordinating with fire direction centers before the convoy's departure enables fire support teams in the convoy security element to enter the appropriate fire control nets, calling for and adjusting fires as necessary.

**13-163.** The convoy security commander must carefully plan for the appropriate CSS to support the operation. He should include fuel and maintenance elements in the convoy or preposition them in secure areas along the route. He also plans for casualty evacuation support that covers the entire route.

**13-164.** Convoy security operations in an urban environment or built-up area require different emphasis and techniques than those in rural areas. The population density and characteristics of the area may require the use of nonlethal weapons and the careful application of lethal weapons. When applying minimum-essential force to minimize loss of life and destruction of property, subordinate commanders must conduct detailed planning, coordination, and control. Whenever possible, convoys should move through populated areas when these areas are the least congested and, therefore, less dangerous to the security of the convoy. Convoy operations may require assistance from military or local police and other governmental agencies to secure the route before the convoy enters the built-up area.

#### **Preparation for Convoy Security Operations**

**13-165.** The convoy commander must rehearse actions on contact for a variety of scenarios. Since the purpose of a convoy is to reach its destination, not to destroy the enemy in a movement to contact, the goal of these responses should be to free the convoy from enemy contact so it can continue its mission. All soldiers and vehicles traveling in the convoy should undergo precombat inspections to ensure they know and adhere to unit SOPs and the vehicles have a reasonable expectation of completing the convoy without mechanical failure. During this stage, drivers take action as necessary to harden their vehicles, such as adding sandbags and Kevlar blankets.



**13-166.** If possible the convoy commander and his key subordinates perform a route reconnaissance of the convoy's route. Shortly prior to the convoy's departure, military police or scouts should perform another route reconnaissance to determine current route conditions. This later route reconnaissance should also remove or neutralize individual mines emplaced by the enemy that endanger the convoy.

#### Execution of Convoy Security Operations

**13-167.** Unless the security force encounters the enemy during the course of the convoy, the convoy conducts operations as discussed in Chapter 14. If the forward reconnaissance element, advance guard, or the flank screen first encounters the enemy, it performs those actions on contact discussed in Chapter 5. If the main body of the convoy is ambushed, the escort elements and all other weapon systems found in the main body return fire and attempt to fight through the ambush. If the main body splits into two or more elements because of the ambush, those elements forward of the ambush site move to a secure location. Those elements decisively engaged dismount their vehicle drivers, air guards, and other security personnel to provide local security. Those main body elements not in contact secure themselves and await the commitment of either an immediate response force composed of unengaged convoy security elements or the response element.

**13-168.** Those elements in contact return fire to suppress identified enemy positions. Combat system drivers position their vehicles to allow their gunners to continue to suppress enemy positions. Dismounted soldiers deploy to eliminate enemy positions within their capabilities. The convoy commander calls for and adjusts indirect fire on positively identified enemy positions. He also reports his situation to his higher commander, requesting assistance from the response force if required. As soon as possible, the commander reorganizes his forces and continues the mission.

#### COMBAT OUTPOSTS

**13-169.** A combat outpost is a reinforced OP capable of conducting limited combat operations. (See Figure 13-19.) Combat outposts are a technique for employing security forces in restrictive

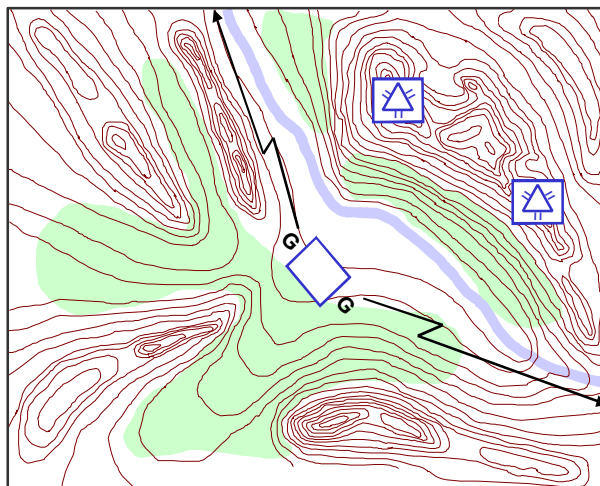


Figure 13-19. Combat Outposts

terrain that precludes mounted security forces from covering the area. They are also used when smaller OPs are in danger of being overrun by enemy forces infiltrating into and through the security area. The commander uses a combat outpost when he wants to extend the depth of his security zone, when he wants his forward OPs to remain in place until they can observe the enemy's main body, or when he anticipates that his forward OPs will be encircled by enemy forces. Both mounted and dismounted forces can employ combat outposts.

**13-170.** While the factors of METT-TC determine the size, location, and number of combat outposts established by a unit, a typical combat outpost is occupied by a reinforced platoon. A combat outpost must have sufficient resources to accomplish its designated missions, but not so much as to seriously deplete the strength of the main body. It is usually located far enough in front of the protected force to preclude enemy ground reconnaissance elements from observing the protected force's actions.

**13-171.** A combat outpost is organized and fortified to provide an all-around defense to withstand a superior enemy force. When the enemy has significant armored capability, a combat outpost may be given more than a standard allocation of antitank weapons. Forces manning combat outposts can conduct aggressive patrolling, engage and destroy enemy reconnaissance elements, and engage the enemy main body prior to their extraction. The commander should plan to extract his forces from the outpost before the enemy has the opportunity to overrun it.

*"Aptitude for war is aptitude for movement."*

**Napoleon I, *Maxims of War*, 1831**

## CHAPTER 14

# TROOP MOVEMENT

**Troop movement is the transporting of troops from one place to another by any available means.** The

fighting power of Army tactical units depends on their ability to move. The essence of battlefield agility is the capability to conduct rapid and orderly movement to concentrate the effects of combat power at decisive points and times. A successful move places troops and equipment at their destination at the proper time ready for combat. Troop movements are either

administrative or tactical. Aspects of both apply to most movements, but one is normally dominant.

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**14-2.** Troop movements are made by foot marches, motor transport, rail, water, air, and various combinations of these methods. The method employed depends upon the situation, the size and composition of the moving unit, the distance the unit must cover, the urgency of execution, and the condition of the troops. It also depends on the availability, suitability, and capacity of the different means of transportation. Troop movements over extended distances have extensive logistics considerations.

**14-3.** *Administrative movement* is one in which troops and vehicles are arranged to conserve transportation mode (air, land, and sea) resources. The commander conducts administrative movements only in secure areas. Enemy interference, except by air, is not anticipated. Examples of administrative movements include rail and highway movement within CONUS. Once a unit deploys into a theater of war, administrative movements are the exception, not the norm. Since these types of moves are nontactical, they are generally conducted under the staff supervision of the echelon logistics officer, the G4 or S4. Considerations for administrative movement and convoy planning can be found in FM 55-40, *Army Motor Transport Units and Operations*. The rest of this chapter addresses tactical movements.

**14-4.** *Tactical movement* occurs within a theater of war when contact with the enemy is possible or anticipated. This style of movement emphasizes tactical considerations such as security and deemphasizes efficiency and ease of movement. The commander organizes his unit to conduct combat operations in a tactical movement. A unit generally

maintains unit integrity throughout its movement. It plans for enemy interference either enroute or shortly after arrival at its destination. Tactical movements use formations and techniques consistent with the factors of METT-TC. The unit may conduct them over unsecured routes if there are no friendly forces between the foremost elements of the moving force and the enemy. The echelon operations officer, the G3, or S3 is the primary staff officer responsible for planning tactical movements, with input from other staff members.

**14-5.** *Dismounted marches*, also called foot marches, are the movement of troops and equipment mainly by foot with limited support by vehicles. They increase the number of maneuver options available to a commander. They are characterized by combat readiness (all personnel can immediately respond to enemy attack without the need to dismount), ease of control, adaptability to terrain, slow rate of movement, and increased personnel fatigue (soldiers carrying heavy loads over long distances or large changes in elevation get tired). They do not depend on the existence of roads. Dismounted marches are made when stealth is required, the distance to travel is short, transport or fuel is limited, or the situation or terrain precludes the use of a large number of vehicles. Field Manual 21-18, *Foot Marches*, has more information on the techniques and procedures for planning, preparing, and executing dismounted marches.

**14-6.** *Mounted marches* are conducted when a unit employs tactical vehicles to move personnel and equipment. Armored and mechanized units routinely conduct mounted marches. The speed of the march and the increased amounts of supplies that can accompany the unit characterize this type of march. Units are normally self-sufficient to conduct mounted marches over short distances. Logistics considerations for mounted marches over extended distances include:

- The ability of the route network to support the numbers, size, and weight of the tactical and combat vehicles assigned to or supporting the unit making the move.
- The availability of refueling and maintenance sites and crew-rest areas.
- The need for recovery and evacuation assets.

**14-7.** Army air movements are operations involving the use of utility and cargo rotary wing assets for other than air assaults. The commander conducts air movement to move troops and equipment, to emplace systems, and to transport ammunition, fuel, and other high-value supplies. He may employ air movements as a substitute for a ground tactical movement. Army air movements are generally faster than ground tactical moves. The

same general considerations that apply to air assault operations also apply to Army air movements. (See Appendix C for a discussion of Air Assault Operations.)

**14-8.** In cases of tactical necessity, a unit can accelerate its rate of movement by conducting a *forced march* so that it arrives at its destination more quickly. Both heavy and light units can conduct a forced march. Forced marches require speed, exertion, and an increase in the number of hours marched or traveled by vehicles each day beyond normal standards. They cannot be sustained for more than a short period of time. In a forced march, a unit may not halt as often nor for as long as recommended for maintenance, rest, feeding, and fuel. The commander must understand that immediately following a long and fast march, his soldiers and combat vehicles experience a temporary deterioration in their physical condition. The combat effectiveness and cohesion of his unit also temporarily decreases. The commander's plan must accommodate the presence of stragglers and address the increased number of maintenance failures.

## FORMS OF TACTICAL MOVEMENT

**14-9.** The forms of tactical movement are the tactical road march and the approach march. **A *tactical road march* is a form of tactical movement used to relocate units within an area of operations when contact with enemy ground forces is not expected. An *approach march* is a form of tactical movement that emphasizes speed over tactical deployment.** Both heavy or light forces conduct tactical road marches and approach marches.

**14-10.** There are several differences between an approach march and a tactical road march. A force conducting an approach march employs larger security forces because of its greater exposure to enemy attack. Units conducting an approach march organize their systems into combined arms organizations. An approach march allows the commander to disperse his task-organized force into a tactical formation in unrestricted terrain without being constrained to existing roads and trails. On the other hand, road marches can organize their columns for administrative convenience; for example, vehicles of a similar type, speed, and cross-country capability move together. Units conducting an approach march establish appropriate tactical intervals between vehicles; they do not normally employ a close column. They also use more routes than units conducting road marches.

## TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

**14-11.** The primary consideration of the tactical road march is rapid movement. However, security is required even though contact with enemy ground forces is not expected.

Units conducting road marches may or may not be task-organized into a combined arms formation. During a tactical road march, the commander is always prepared to take immediate action if the enemy attacks. (See Figure 14-1.)

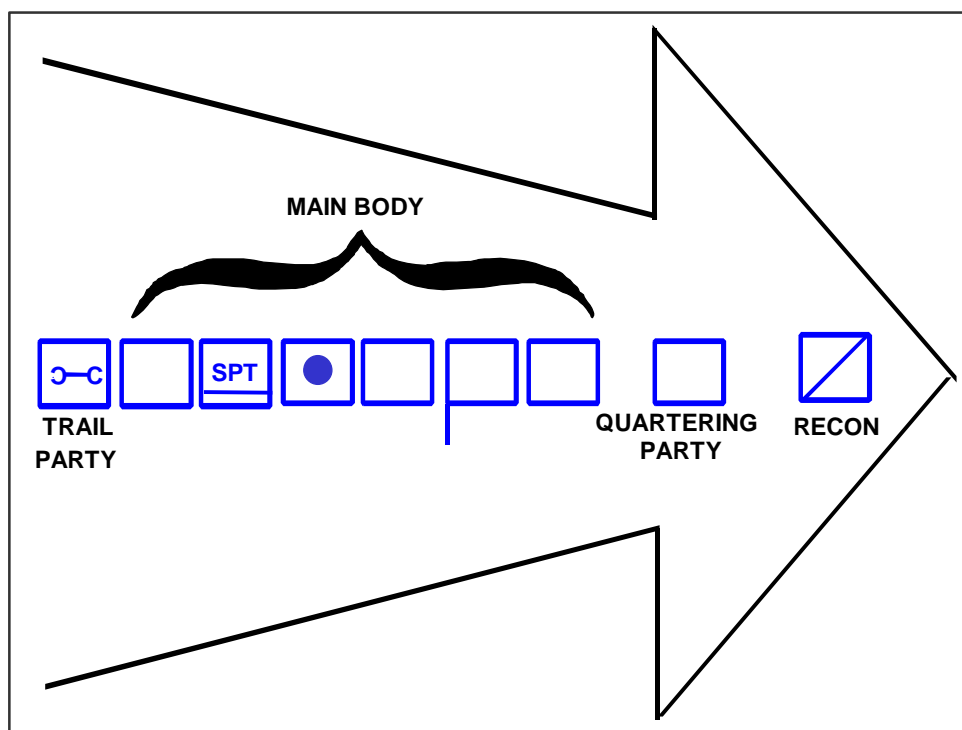


Figure 14-1. Tactical Road March

#### Organization for a Tactical Road March

**14-12.** The organization for a tactical road march is the march column. A march column consists of all elements using the same route for a single movement under control of a single commander. The commander organizes a march column into four elements : reconnaissance, quartering party, main body, and trail party. A brigade conducting a tactical road march is an example of a march column. The subordinate elements of a march column are a march serial and a march unit. A march serial is a major subdivision of a march column that is organized under one commander who plans, regulates, and controls the serial. An example is a battalion serial formed from a brigade-size march column. A march unit is a subdivision of a march serial. It moves and halts under the control of a single commander who uses voice and visual signals. An example of a march unit is a company from a battalion-size march serial.

**14-13.** A march column provides excellent speed, control, and flexibility, but sacrifices flank security. It provides the ability to deploy forces to the front of the column. The

commander uses a march column when speed is essential and enemy contact is unlikely. However, the commander spaces combat support elements, such as air defense and engineers, throughout the column to protect and support the movement. Reconnaissance elements augmented by engineer, NBC reconnaissance, and other CS assets as appropriate conduct a route reconnaissance of the march routes. (Field Manual 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance*, discusses route reconnaissance.) This reconnaissance confirms and supplements the data obtained from map studies and other headquarters.

**14-14.** A unit quartering party usually accompanies the reconnaissance effort to the designated assembly area (AA). Unit standing operating procedures establish the exact composition of the quartering party and its transportation, security, and communications equipment needs, and its specific duties. The quartering party secures, reconnoiters, and organizes an area for the main body's arrival and occupation. It typically reconnoiters and confirms the tentative locations selected by the commander of its parent element based on a map reconnaissance. When necessary, the quartering party changes previously assigned unit locations within the AA. The quartering party guides the main body into position from the release point to precise locations within the AA.

**14-15.** The main body of the march column consists of the remainder of the unit, including attachments minus the trail party. The trail party is the last march unit in a march column and normally consists of primarily maintenance elements in a mounted march. It maintains communications with the main body. The function of the trail party is to recover disabled vehicles or control stragglers in a dismounted march. If a disabled vehicle cannot be repaired immediately, it is towed and its crew and passengers are moved to a unit maintenance collection point located at a secure area near the movement route.

#### Graphic Control Measures

**14-16.** The commander directing a tactical road march often uses a strip map or overlay to graphically depict critical information about the route to his subordinates. The overlay or strip map should show the route of march, start points (SPs), release points (RPs), checkpoints, critical points (such as bridges), light line, and traffic control points (TCPs). (See Figure 14-2.) Other graphic control measures include AA and PL.

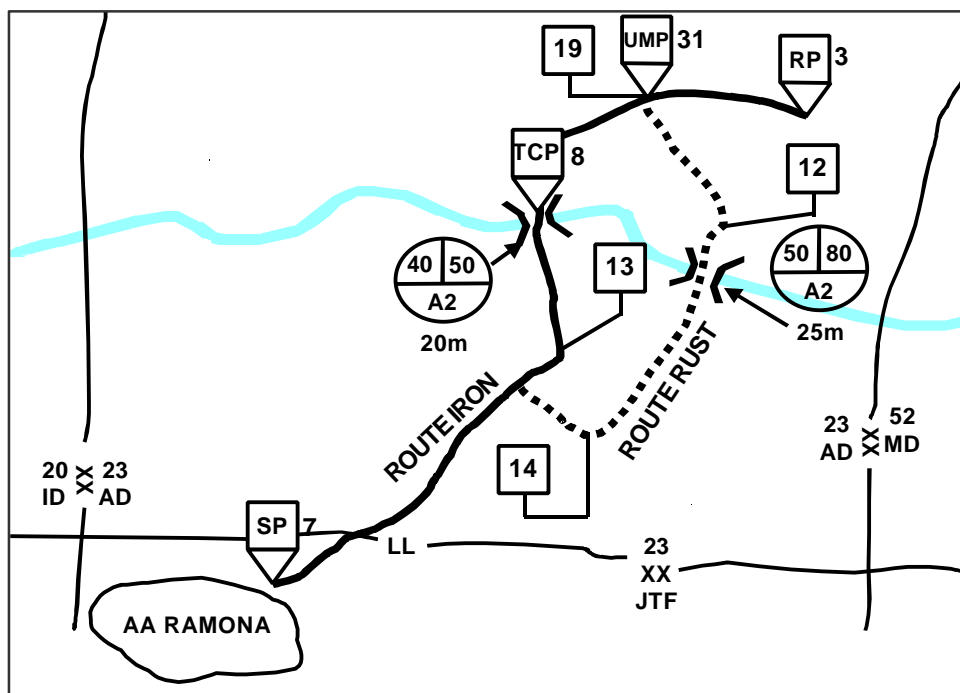


Figure 14-2. Route Control Measures

**14-17. The SP is a location on a route where the marching elements fall under the control of a designated march commander.** Figure 14-3 shows start point 7. All routes must have a designated SP. The SP must be easily recognizable on the map and on the ground, such as a road junction. It must be far enough from the assembly area to allow units to organize and move at the prescribed speed and interval when they reach the SP.

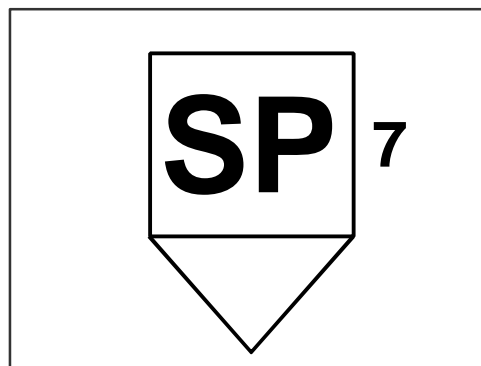


Figure 14-3. Start Point

**14-18. An RP is a location on a route where marching elements are released from centralized control.** Figure 14-4 shows release point 11. Each

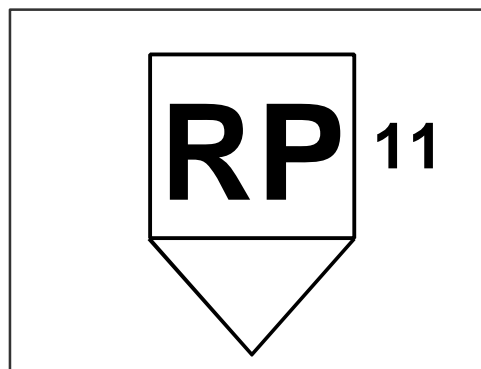


Figure 14-4. Release Point

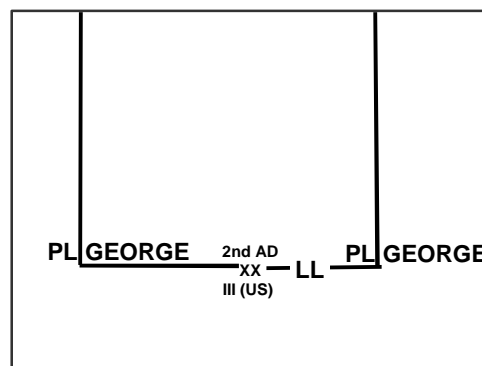


SP must have a corresponding RP. The RP must be easy to recognize on the ground. Marching units do not stop at the RP; instead, as they move through them they are met by unit guides and led to assembly areas.

**14-19.** The commander designates checkpoints along the route to assist marching units in gauging their compliance with the timetable. Also, the movement overlay identifies critical points along the route where interference with movement might occur. The commander positions manned TCPs along the route to prevent congestion and confusion. They may be manned by MPs or unit personnel. These personnel report to the appropriate area movement control organization when each convoy, march column, and march serial arrives at and completes passage of its location.

**14-20. A light line is a designated phase line, forward of which vehicles are required to use blackout lights during periods of limited visibility.** Commanders at either corps or division echelon establish it based upon the risk that the enemy will be able to detect vehicles moving using white light. Figure 14-5 depicts the light line for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division as the division rear boundary.

Field Manual 55-40, *Army Motor Transport Units and Operations*, details other march control measures, such as the bridge classification symbols depicted in Figure 14-2.



**Figure 14-5. Light Line**

### **Tactical March Techniques**

**14-21.** Units conducting tactical road marches employ three movement techniques: open column, close column, and infiltration. Each of these techniques uses scheduled halts to control and to sustain the road march. The factors of METT-TC require adjustments in the standard distances between vehicles and soldiers. During movement, elements within a column of any length may encounter many different types of routes and obstacles simultaneously. Consequently, different parts of the column may be moving at different speeds at the same time, which can produce an undesirable, accordion-like effect. The movement order establishes the order of march, rate of march, interval or time gaps between units, column gap, and maximum catch-up speed. Unless the commander directs them not to do so for security reasons, march units report when

they have crossed each control point. During the move, the commander maintains air and ground security.

#### *Open Column.*

**14-22.** In an open column, the commander increases the distance between vehicles and soldiers to provide greater dispersion. The vehicle distance varies from 50 to 100 meters, and may be greater if required. The distance between dismounted soldiers varies from two to five meters to allow for dispersion and space for marching comfort. Any distance that exceeds five meters between soldiers increases the length of the column and hinders control. The open-column technique is normally used during daylight. It may also be used at night with infrared lights, blackout lights, or passive night-vision equipment. Using an open column roughly doubles the column's length and thereby doubles the time it takes to clear any given point when compared to a close column. The open column is the most common movement technique because it offers the most security while still providing the commander with a reasonable degree of control. In an open column, vehicle density varies from 15 to 20 vehicles per kilometer. A single light infantry company, with intervals between its platoons, occupies roughly a kilometer of road or trail.

#### *Close Column*

**14-23.** In a close column, the commander spaces his vehicles about 20 to 25 meters apart. At night, he spaces vehicles so each driver can see the two lights in the blackout marker of the vehicle ahead. The commander normally employs a close column for marches during darkness under blackout driving conditions or for marches in restricted terrain. This method of marching takes maximum advantage of the traffic capacity of a route but provides little dispersion. Normally, vehicle density is from 40 to 50 vehicles per kilometer along the route in a close column.

**14-24.** The dismounted equivalent to the close column is a limited-visibility march. The distance between individual soldiers is reduced to one to three meters to help maintain contact and facilitate control. Limited-visibility marches are characterized by closed formations, difficult command and control and reconnaissance, a slow rate of march, and good concealment from enemy visual observation and air attack.

#### *Infiltration*

**14-25.** The commander dispatches vehicles in small groups, or at irregular intervals at a rate that keeps the traffic density down and prevents undue massing of vehicles during a move by infiltration. Infiltration provides the best possible passive defense against en-

emy observation and attack. It is suited for tactical road marches when there is enough time and road space and when the commander desires the maximum security, deception, and dispersion. The disadvantages of an infiltration are that more time is required to complete the move, column control is nearly impossible, and recovery of broken-down vehicles by the trail party is more protracted when compared to vehicle recovery in close and open columns. Additionally, unit integrity is not restored until the last vehicle arrives at the destination, which complicates the onward deployment of the unit. Infiltration during troop movement should not be confused with infiltration as a form of offensive maneuver as discussed in Chapter 4.

**14-26.** During extended road marches, halts are necessary to rest personnel, service vehicles, and adjust movement schedules as necessary. The march order or unit standing operating procedures (SOP) regulates when to take halts. In motor movements, the commander schedules short halts for every two to three hours of movement and may last up to an hour. Long halts occur on marches that exceed 24 hours and last no more than two hours. Long halts are not scheduled at night, which allows maximum time for night movement. During halts, each unit normally clears the march route and moves to a previously selected assembly area to prevent route congestion and to avoid being a lucrative target. Units establish security and take other measures to protect the force. Unit leaders receive prompt notification of the time and approximate length of unscheduled halts.

**14-27.** The commander emphasizes the need to maintain security during halts. Once a unit stops moving, there is a natural tendency for personnel to let their guard down and relax their vigilance.

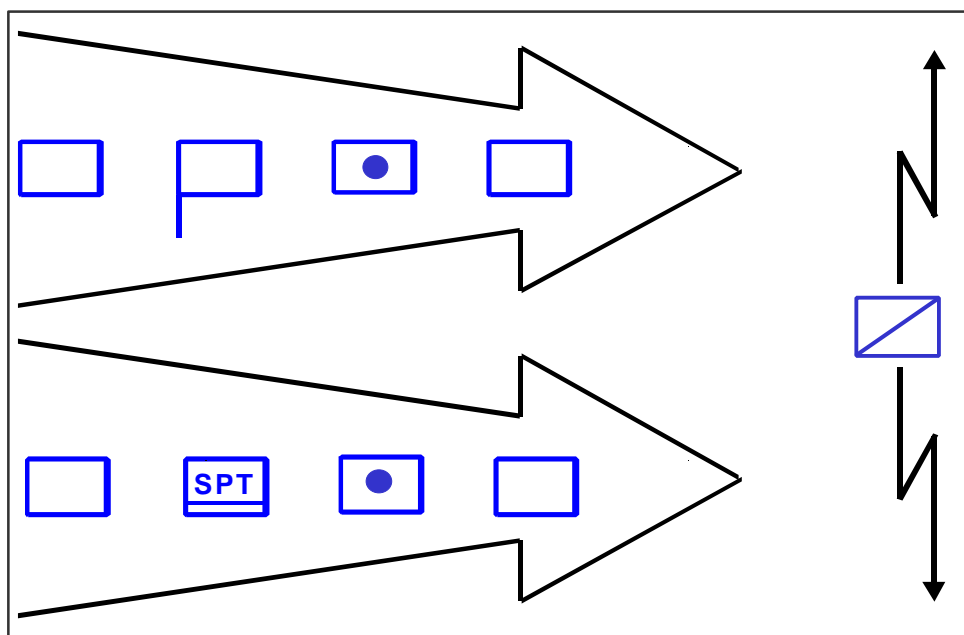


Figure 14-6. Approach March

## APPROACH MARCH

**14-28.** The commander employs an approach march when the enemy's approximate location is known, since it allows the force to move with greater speed and less physical security or dispersion. (See Figure 14-6.) Units conducting an approach march are task-organized before the march begins to allow them to transition to an on-order or a be-prepared mission without making major adjustments in organization. For example, artillery units march within their supported unit's columns, while engineer units are well forward to facilitate mobility. Air defense may leapfrog short-range and medium-range assets to ensure continuous coverage. The approach march terminates in a march objective, such as an attack position, assembly area, or assault position, or can be used to transition to an attack. Follow and assume and reserve forces may also conduct an approach march forward of a LD.

**14-29.** Based on the products of his intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process, the overall commander should assign an AO or an axis of advance in combination with routes to the unit conducting the approach march. These routes, AOs, or axes should facilitate the force's movement and maximize its use of available concealment. Within the approach march, the forces conducting the decisive operation(s) and the forces conducting each shaping operation should be assigned their own routes, AOs, or axes of advance unless a unit has the task of either follow-and-assume or follow-and-support.

**14-30.** As the approach march nears areas of likely enemy interference, the commander divides his main body into smaller, less vulnerable columns that move on additional multiple routes or cross-country while continuing to employ security elements. As discussed in Chapter 13, the advance and any flank guards remain within supporting distance of the main body, which stays in these smaller columns to facilitate rapid movement.

## MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

**14-31.** The commander uses the combat formations described in Chapter 4 in conjunction with three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and

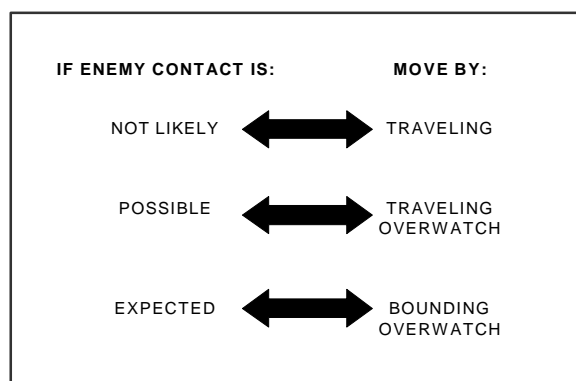
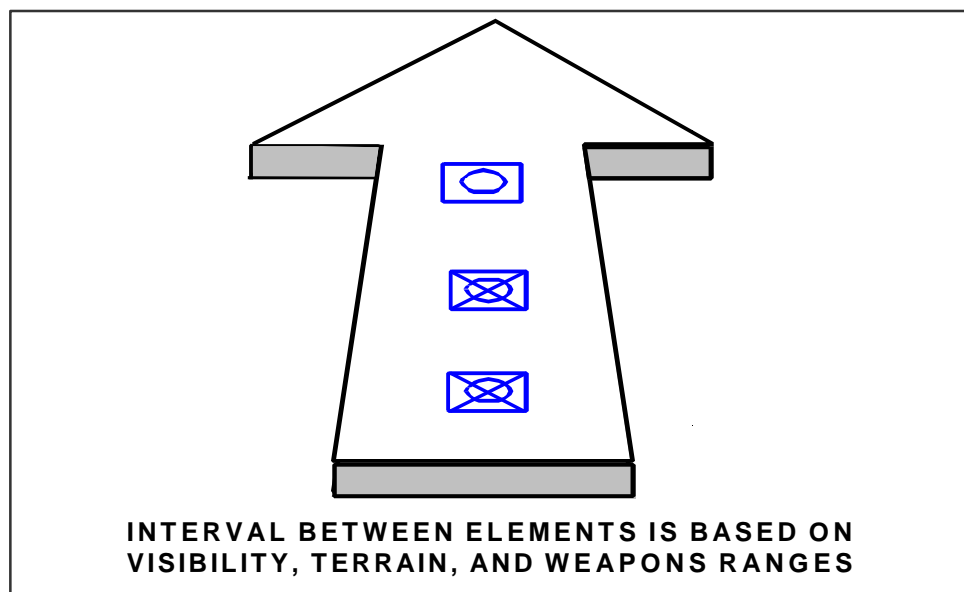


Figure 14-7. Movement Techniques

bounding overwatch. Figure 14-7 shows when a unit is most likely to use each technique.

**14-32.** Movement techniques limit the unit's exposure to enemy fire and position it in a good formation to react to enemy contact. The commander selects the appropriate movement technique based on the chance of enemy contact. While moving, individual soldiers and vehicles use the terrain to protect themselves any time enemy contact is possible or expected. They use natural cover and concealment to avoid enemy fires. The following rules apply to soldiers and vehicle crews using terrain for protection:

- Do not silhouette yourself against the skyline.
- Do not move directly forward from a concealed firing position.
- Cross open areas quickly.
- Avoid possible kill zones because it is easier to cross difficult terrain than fight the enemy on unfavorable terms.
- Avoid large, open areas, especially when they are dominated by high ground or by terrain that can cover and conceal the enemy.
- Take active countermeasures, such as the use of smoke and direct and indirect fires, to suppress or obscure suspected enemy positions.



**Figure 14-8. Traveling**

### **Traveling**

**14-33.** The commander uses the traveling movement technique when speed is necessary and contact with enemy forces is not likely. All elements of the unit move simultaneously. The commander or small unit leader locates where he can best control the situation. Trailing elements may move in parallel columns to shorten the column and reaction time. (See Figure 14-8.)

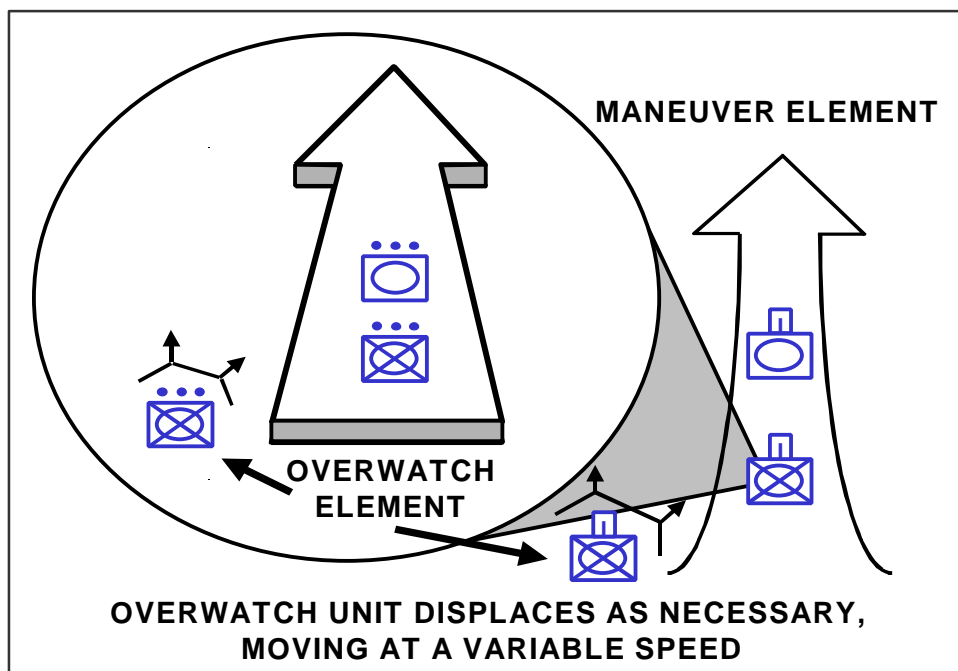


Figure 14-9. Traveling Overwatch

### Traveling Overwatch

**14-34.** The commander uses the traveling overwatch movement technique when contact with enemy forces is possible, but speed is important. The lead element is continuously moving while the trailing elements move at variable speeds, sometimes pausing to overwatch movement of the lead element. (See Figure 14-9.) The trailing elements key their movement to the terrain, overwatching from a position where they can support the lead element if it engages the enemy. The trailing elements overwatch from positions and at distances that will not prevent them from firing or moving to support the lead element.

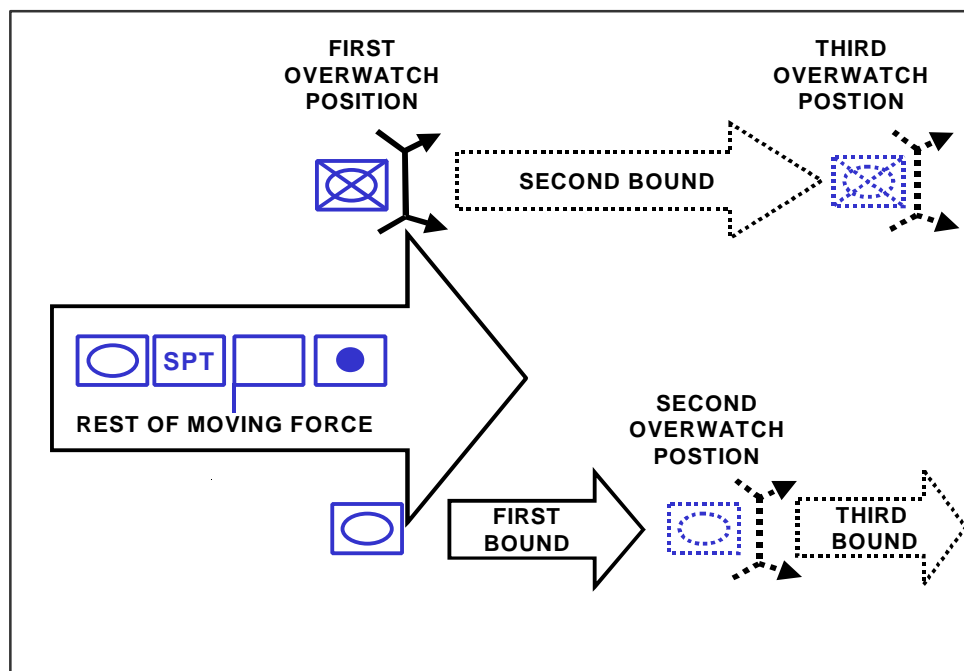
### Bounding Overwatch

**14-35.** The commander uses the bounding overwatch movement technique when he expects to make contact with enemy forces. There are two variations of this technique: alternate bounds and successive bounds. In both cases, the overwatching elements cover the bounding elements from covered, concealed positions with good observation and fields of fire against possible enemy positions. They can immediately support the bounding elements with maneuver or fires alone if the bounding elements make contact. Unless they make contact enroute, the bounding elements move via covered and concealed routes into the next set of overwatching positions. The length of the bound is

based on the terrain and the range of overwatching weapons. The commander can use the uncommitted part of the force whenever he feels it is needed as part of an immediate and controlled reaction to any threat to the bounding force. In bounding overwatch, all movement keys on the next overwatch position, which should offer at least some of the following advantages:

- Cover and concealment.
- Good observation and fields of fire.
- Protection for stationary weapon platforms.

**14-36.** If the unit uses alternate bounds, the lead element moves forward, halts, and assumes overwatch positions. It is at all times covered by the rear overwatching element. That former rear overwatching element advances past the former lead element and takes an overwatch position. The initial lead element then advances past the initial trail element and assumes another overwatch position. One element moves at a time. This method is usually more rapid than successive bounds. (See Figure 14-10.)



**Figure 14-10. Bounding Overwatch — Alternate Bounds**

**14-37.** If the unit uses successive bounds, the lead element, covered by the trail element, advances and occupies an overwatch position. The trail element advances to an overwatch position abreast of the lead element and halts. The lead element moves to the next position and the move continues. Only one element moves at a time and the trail element avoids advancing beyond the lead element. (See Figure 14-11.)

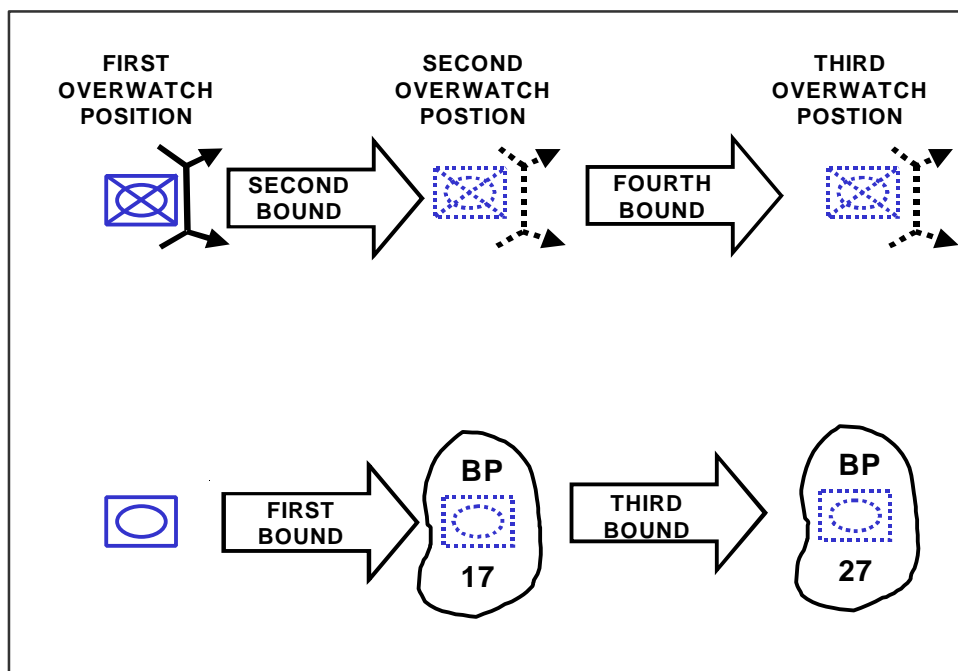


Figure 14-11. Bounding Overwatch — Successive Bounds

## PLANNING FOR TACTICAL MOVEMENT

**14-38.** The commander plans and executes tactical movements to ensure the organized and uninterrupted flow of tactical units throughout the area of operations. The objective of a successful move is for the unit to arrive at its destination in a condition suitable to its probable employment. The goal of all movement planning is to retain flexibility to execute a variety of plans to meet everchanging conditions. The commander ensures that his unit's movement SOP contains specifics and he conducts rehearsals to ensure that his soldiers and subordinate leaders understand it. The SOP should use a standard task organization to simplify planning, provide flexibility, and allow greater responsiveness. Such a SOP allows for smoother cooperation between the unit's subordinate elements and outside supporting elements by establishing habitual relationships.

**14-39.** The movement order is the end result of his planning process. The movement order is prepared as an annex to an operation order (OPORD) or as a separate OPORD. Prepared in a five-paragraph format, it consists of critical information needed by a unit to plan and execute the movement. Information normally found in the movement order includes the destination, routes, orders of march, rates of march, times that each serial (or march element for serial movement orders) will arrive and clear its SP, intervals, speeds, schedule maintenance halts, communications, and location of the commander.



The commander should also identify logistics sites and services in his movement order. He need not include information and procedures contained in movement SOP in the movement order. The movement order should include a strip map or overlay. The format for a movement order is covered in FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*.

**14-40.** The commander bases his movement plan on the best available intelligence on the enemy, terrain, weather, and unit capabilities. This plan establishes how the unit will move from its current location to the desired location. The integration of and support from combat and combat support systems, such as artillery, air defense, and engineers are critical for a successful tactical movement. The commander's operations staff develops the detailed movement order with the assistance of the commander's logistics staff in accordance with his established priorities.

**14-41.** The movement plan and unit SOP must address the possibility of ambushes, indirect fires, and air attacks. A small-unit SOP includes drills for reacting to these circumstances. Passive measures to mitigate the effects of an air attack include route selection, vehicle intervals, and movement during limited visibility. In case of attack the commander has an evacuation plan for casualties. This plan takes into account SOP items, such as using combat lifesavers and dispersing medical evacuation assets throughout the convoy.

**14-42.** For units that are not one hundred percent mobile in organic vehicles, such as a corps headquarters and many CSS units, the commander can either conduct a shuttle with its organic vehicles or request assistance from transportation units. Shuttling requires transporting troops, equipment, and supplies by a series of round trips with the same vehicles. It may also be performed by carrying successive parts of a load for short distances, while the remaining soldiers continue on foot.

**14-43.** The logistics staff also coordinates the logistics support needed for the move. Units should carry fuel and lubricants in their unit trains to support the move. In coordination with the engineers, the logistics staff ensures that routes are adequate to support the movement of the types and numbers of vehicles and supplies projected for movement. The commander must be aware of the load-carrying capability of each route and the distances over which forces can be supported. His logistics operators determine if any logistics assets should displace to support the mission. The commander also establishes halts for refueling as part of his movement plan. Halt times should be long enough and locations large enough to allow the entire march unit to refuel.

**14-44.** The simplest troop movement scenario to plan and conduct is one where the commander directing the movement controls the entire AO. In this situation, he can use his normal C<sup>2</sup> system. The headquarters ordering the tactical road march schedules the movement times and approves the routes while its movements control organization allocates the required space and time on the approved routes. If the movement results in a unit going outside of its parent headquarters' AO, coordination through various movement control centers (MCCs) is required. Otherwise, a higher headquarters must plan and control the movement.

**14-45.** Whenever possible, the commander should use multiple routes to move his unit. This reduces the length of columns, the vulnerability to enemy air attack, and the amount of time the routes are not available to other units. Multiple routes provide the commander with the flexibility to react to unexpected situations and permit more rapid concentration of combat power. The two primary disadvantages of using multiple routes are: difficulty in exercising command and control, and the unit not having enough resources to provide logistical and maintenance support on multiple routes.

**14-46.** The echelon transportation officer uses route classification components, such as route widths, route types, military load classifications, overhead clearance, route obstructions and special conditions, as he determines his traffic circulation plan. Field Manual 5-170, *Engineer Reconnaissance*, defines these components and describes how to use them. The traffic circulation plan is depicted on overlays using transportation control measures. The traffic circulation plan takes into account the following:

- The most restrictive route features and route designations.
- Direction of movement over each route.
- Location of boundaries, units, highway regulation points, traffic control points, and principal supply points.
- Major geographic features and light lines, if applicable.
- Routes designated for one-way traffic.
- Separate routes for CSS and tactical units.
- Current data on traffic regulation and control restrictions, obstructions, detours, defiles, capacities, surface conditions, and enemy activities that affect the highway net.

From information contained in the traffic circulation plan, a traffic control plan is prepared — usually by the provost marshal — from information contained in the traffic circulation plan. The traffic control plan normally is prepared in the form of an overlay. The commander primarily uses available aviation, movement regulating teams (MRTs), and MP units to assist in traffic control, but can assign this mission to other units, such as battalion scout platoons.

## PREPARATIONS FOR TROOP MOVEMENT

**14-47.** Reconnaissance precedes unit movement. Before a unit starts any march, a reconnaissance element from that unit should reconnoiter the route from its current location to the start point and determine how long it will take the unit to reach the start point. This reconnaissance effort continues beyond the start point and carefully examines the route's trafficability, including the impact of weather, such as ice, snow, and rain. This reconnaissance should also include alternate routes and choke points, such as defiles, bridges, and fords, which could slow the march. It complements map and technical reconnaissance. This reconnaissance effort provides the commander with important information about the terrain, obstacles, and potential enemy forces within his AO. He can then take steps to establish traffic control points at critical locations along the route or mark the route where it becomes confusing.

**14-48.** A quartering party often accompanies reconnaissance elements. It may mark routes and battle positions. The party may also secure new positions with observation posts or limited forces until the unit conducting the movement arrives.

**14-49.** The unit begins a tactical movement, such as a road march, fully supplied. The unit should refuel at every opportunity, such as at halts and upon arrival at the final destination. The transportation of fuel and the security of existing stockpiles are major factors in any mounted road march. The commander may choose to conduct a refuel on the move (ROM) to extend the range of his vehicles. Refuel on the move is a technique in which the commander positions POL tankers just off the route of the march to refuel combat and tactical vehicles rapidly, but only in the previously established quantities necessary to extend their range the desired amount.

**14-50.** Based on the form of movement selected and the march and movement techniques adopted, the commander may have to preposition CSS assets to conduct a rapid and efficient refueling and resupply effort. Generally, a column formation is the easiest movement technique to support. Any other formation requires increased logistics planning. Night movements require special preparation because all soldiers do not have night-vision devices. These special preparations include marking vehicles so that they can be identified by friendly forces, leaders making sure that all soldiers have light-reflective tape on their camouflage band, and repositioning vehicles and soldiers closer together so they can detect each others' movement.

## EXECUTION OF TROOP MOVEMENT

**14-51.** A unit's ability to execute movement depends upon its march discipline and ability to maintain required movement standards and procedures as prescribed by its movement SOP and movement order, such as staying on the given route and maintaining start, passage, and clear times. March discipline is absolutely essential throughout the movement. Any deviation from the movement order may interfere with the movements of other units and may have serious consequences. However, march discipline can only be maintained when the plan matches conditions and the unit's ability to move.

**14-52.** The strength and composition of the moving unit's security elements vary, depending upon the factors of METT-TC. The commander employs his organic assets and any supporting security assets to protect his forces from enemy activities. He positions them to the front, rear, and flanks of his formations while moving and at the halt to provide all-around security for the main body. He can also enhance security by adopting a march formation and movement technique that facilitate the application of combat power in the direction he expects to make contact with the enemy.

**14-53.** Higher echelon CSS organizations may support some tactical movements. When the situation permits, CSS organizations establish maintenance, ambulance exchange, and supply points along the route. While the procedures, amounts, and types of external support vary among major commands, each logistics organization ensures that these sites are operational at predesignated and published times and locations. External CSS support along the route may include aeromedical evacuation, maintenance, water, and POL. Maintenance sites generally consist of maintenance collection points (MCPs) where disabled vehicles can be moved for limited maintenance and Class IX. Vehicles unable to continue the movement remain at a MCP and join their parent organization when repaired. The troop movement is complete when the last element clears the release point.

*"... the necessity for conservation of the fighting power of the troops requires provision for the periodic relief of units in line."*

FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations*, 22 May 1941

## CHAPTER 15

# RELIEF IN PLACE

**A relief in place is an enabling operation in which, by the direction of higher authority, all or part of a unit is replaced in an area by the incoming unit.**

The directing authority transfers the responsibilities for the mission and the assigned AO from the replaced elements to the incoming unit. A commander conducts a relief in place

as part of a larger operation primarily to maintain the combat effectiveness of committed units. The higher headquarters directs when and where to conduct the relief and establishes the appropriate control measures. Normally, the unit relieved is defending. However, a relief may set the stage for resuming offensive operations. A relief may also serve to free the relieved unit for other tasks, such as decontamination, reconstitution, routine rest, resupply, maintenance, or specialized training. Sometimes, as part of a larger operation, a commander wants the enemy to discover the relief because it might cause the enemy to do something in response that is prejudicial to his interest, such as move reserves from an area where the friendly commander wants to conduct a penetration.

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**15-2.** There are three techniques for conducting a relief sequentially, simultaneously, or in a staggered manner. A sequential relief occurs when each element within the relieved unit is relieved in succession from right to left or left to right depending on how it is deployed. A simultaneous relief occurs when all elements within the relieved unit are relieved at the same time. A staggered relief occurs when the commander relieves each element within the relieved unit in a sequence determined by the tactical situation, not its geographical orientation. Simultaneous relief takes the least amount of time to execute but is the one most easily detected by the enemy. Sequential or staggered reliefs can take place over a significant amount of time.

**15-3.** A relief is either deliberate or hasty depending on the amount of planning time and preparations. The major differences are the depth and detail of planning and, potentially, the execution time. Detailed planning generally facilitates shorter execution time by determining exactly what needs to be done and the resources needed to accomplish the mission. Deliberate planning allows the commander and his staff to identify, develop, and coordinate solutions to most potential problems before they can occur and to ensure the availability of resources when and where they are needed.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**15-4.** Both units involved in a relief in place should be of similar type, such as mounted or dismounted, and task organization to help maintain operations security (OPSEC). The relieving unit usually assumes as closely as possible the same task organization as the unit being relieved. It assigns responsibilities and deploys in a configuration similar to that of the relieved unit.

**15-5.** The relieving unit establishes advance parties to conduct detailed coordination and preparations for the operation down to the company level and possibly to the platoon level. These advance parties infiltrate forward to avoid detection. They normally include the echelon's tactical command post. This command post co-locates with the main headquarters of the unit being relieved. Additional liaison personnel may also be attached to subordinate units to ensure a smooth changeover between subordinate units.

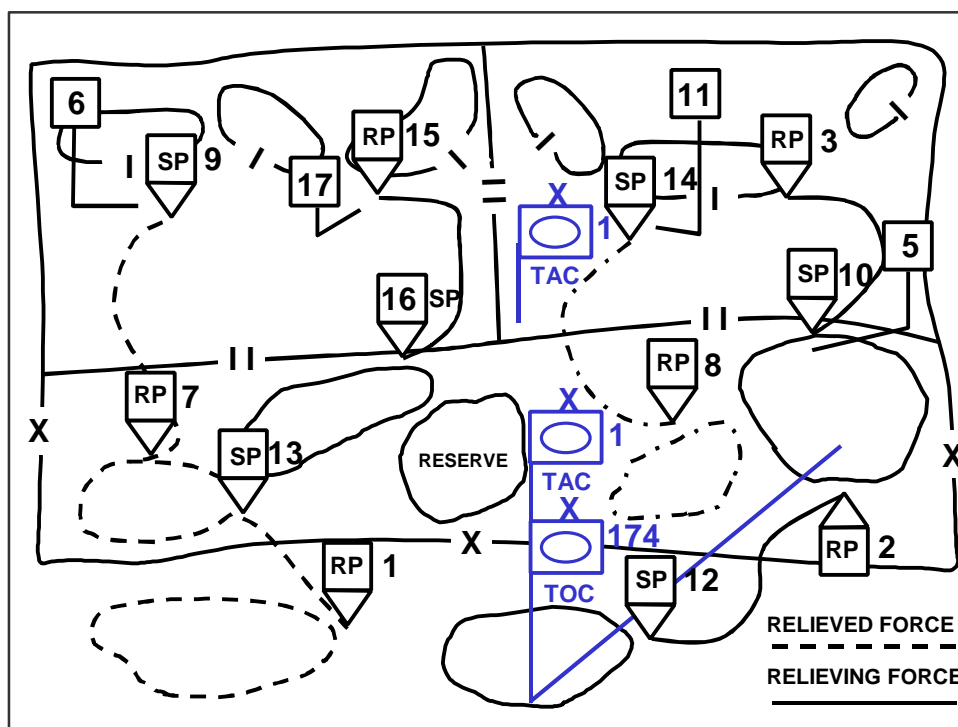


Figure 15-1. Example Overlay of a Brigade Relief in Place

## CONTROL MEASURES

**15-6.** Control measures associated with a relief in place are generally restrictive in nature to prevent fratricide. As a minimum, these control measures include the AO with its associated boundaries, battle positions, contact points, start points, routes, release points, assembly areas, and defensive fire coordination measures, such as target reference points and engagement areas. (See Figure 15-1.) All of these control measures are discussed elsewhere in this

manual. The commander may use any other control measure or measures that he feels is necessary to conduct a relief in place.

## PLANNING A RELIEF IN PLACE

**15-7.** Once ordered to conduct a relief in place, the commander of the relieving unit contacts the commander of the unit to be relieved. The co-location of unit command posts also helps achieve the level of coordination required. If the relieved unit's forward elements can defend the AO, the relieving unit executes the relief in place from the rear to the front. This facilitates movement and terrain management.

**15-8.** In a deliberate relief, units exchange plans and liaison personnel, conduct briefings, perform detailed reconnaissance, and publish orders with detailed instructions. In a hasty relief, the planning process is abbreviated and the execution is conducted using oral and fragmentary orders. In both cases, the relieved unit designates liaison personnel from its combat, CS, and CSS elements to remain with the relieving unit until completing the necessary plans. The relieving unit receives current intelligence, operations, and logistics information from the unit being relieved, as well as common higher headquarters, adjacent units, and subordinate elements. The complexity of a relief in place requires extensive liaison and reconnaissance. Exchanging information on the enemy situation, friendly dispositions, terrain analysis, and fire support and obstacle plans, coupled with reconnaissance, assists the relieving force commander in planning and executing his mission.

**15-9.** The relief is a tactically vulnerable operation. The units involved must concentrate on security while preparing for and conducting the operation. The intent of the operation is to complete the relief without being discovered by the enemy. Consequently, commanders typically plan reliefs for execution during periods of reduced visibility, such as night or fog. Concealment of the relief from the enemy is a primary concern when the relief is being conducted as part of an economy of force measure to free forces for other operations. The enemy should perceive only one unit's command structure in operation — which should be that of the unit being relieved — until completion of the operation.

**15-10.** Generally, as soon as their mutual higher headquarters issues the warning order, the commander of the relieving unit prefers to co-locate one of his command posts with the command post of the unit being relieved. As a minimum, he establishes communications and liaison with the unit being relieved. The warning order includes the time of relief, units to relieve, and sequence of events. It also designates the relieving units. It specifies the future missions of the force to be relieved, route priorities, any restrictions on advance parties, any extraordinary security measures, and the time and place for the issuance of the complete order.

**15-11.** During a relief, commanders and leaders from the relieving unit should conduct reconnaissance of the area for which they will assume responsibility. This leaders' reconnaissance should take place to the lowest echelon allowed by the tactical situation. This reconnaissance should focus on the route into the position the unit is to occupy the positions themselves, the current disposition of the unit being relieved and any obstacles that could affect troop movement.

**15-12.** The two commanders must decide on a time or an event that initiates the passage of command. Normally, this occurs when the frontline subordinate commanders have assumed responsibility for their respective AOs and the incoming commander has sufficient communications facilities in operation to control the operation. Despite their parent organization, all units in the AO come under the operational control of the AO commander if the AO comes under attack or when a specified event occurs during the relief.

**15-13.** The fire support coordinators (FSCOORDs) coordinate fire control measures and identify those artillery and other fire support units that are available to support the relief. The relieving unit adopts the fire plan of the unit being relieved. The fire support assets of both units support the relief. This is critical in the event the enemy detects the relief and tries to exploit the situation. Units plan their fires to deceive the enemy and expedite the relief. Normal activity patterns should be maintained, with the average number of rounds fired per day or hour prior to the relief being fired during the relief. The commander should not relieve fire support and other CS and CSS units at the same time as the maneuver units they support. The commander relieves these organizations at other times.

**15-14.** The relief plan must specify the method used in relieving artillery units. If terrain allows, relieving artillery units should not occupy previously used firing positions. Instead, relieving firing units should establish firing positions nearby those firing positions of the relieved unit and carefully integrate their fire with that of the relieved unit. Occupation of firing positions at night or during periods of poor visibility enhances OPSEC.

**15-15.** Priority of the air defense effort is to protect identified choke points, battle positions, routes used to conduct the operation, and assembly areas. The air defense assets of both units support the relief. The air defense unit supporting the relieving force coordinates with the replaced force's supporting air defense unit. This coordination covers, but is not limited to, air IPB, rules of engagement, current air activity, present fire unit positions, AC<sup>2</sup> information, the operations plan, logistics, and communications. Higher-echelon and joint air defense organizations may also support the relief. Provisions to obtain local air superiority reduce the vulnerability of the forces during the relief in place when congestion cannot be avoided on the ground.



**15-16.** The relieving unit verifies the obstacle records of the unit being relieved. The hand-over of obstacles is a complex procedure. Initially, the engineer priority is on mobility to get the relieving unit into the AO. It focuses on those routes and lanes leading into the AO. Once the relief occurs, priority of the mobility and survivability effort transitions to support the relieving unit's continuing mission. The commander may require his engineers to assist with survivability tasks to support the relieving force.

**15-17.** The intermingling of forces inherent in a relief places an increased burden on  $C^2$  systems. The consequences of mutual interference between the units and the complexity associated with such areas as traffic control, fire support coordination, obstacle plans, and communications require close coordination between all headquarters involved. Establishment of early liaison between the stationary and the relieving forces is critical.

**15-18.** The relieving unit is responsible for all sustainment area functions. As the support elements of the unit being relieved displace, they leave the relieving unit supply stocks according to previously coordinated arrangements. The two units' sustainment command posts also co-locate and a single traffic headquarters coordinates the movement in and out of the AO.

## PREPARATION FOR A RELIEF IN PLACE

**15-19.** The commander conceals the relief from the enemy for as long as possible. At the first indication that a relief is necessary, which is usually the warning order for the relieving unit, both the relieved unit and the relieving unit review their operations security plans and procedures. Commanders may use deception measures when conducting a relief in place to maintain secrecy. To maintain security during the relief in place, the relieving unit makes maximum use of the relieved unit's radio nets and operators. Both units involved in the relief operate on the command frequencies and encryption variables of the relieved unit at all levels. The relieved unit's signal officer is in charge of communications throughout the relief operation.

**15-20.** To enhance security, commanders impose light and noise discipline and electromagnetic emission control measures, such as radio silence or radio-listening silence. In joint and multinational operations, the senior commander specifies the frequency bands and equipment types affected. Radio silence is a condition in which all or specific radio equipment are turned off. Radio-listening silence is a situation in which radios remain turned on and monitored with strict criteria when a station on the radio network is allowed to break silence. An example of radio-listening silence would be, "Maintain radio listening silence until physical contact with the enemy is made."

1           **15-21.** The units conduct rehearsals to discover any weaknesses in the relief plan and to fi-  
2 miliarize all elements of both forces with the plan. Finding time to conduct rehearsals requires  
3 commander and staffs at all levels to focus on time management.

4           **15-22.** Reconnaissance elements of the relieving unit precede its movement with a route re-  
5 connaissance to the assembly area. They conduct reconnaissance of the routes leading from the  
6 assembly areas to the positions of the unit being relieved. The commander of the relieving unit  
7 normally conducts a leader's reconnaissance of these proposed positions before their occupation.

8           **15-23.** While the units involved plan, prepare, and execute the relief in place, their common  
9 higher headquarters and other units continue actions to mask the relief. These include the use  
10 of demonstrations, feints, smoke, and harassing and interdiction fires. The common higher  
11 headquarters executes operations to attack and disrupt the enemy's uncommitted and reserve  
12 forces during the conduct of the relief. Its intent is to fix or distract the enemy so that he does  
13 not detect or interfere with the relief.

#### 14 **EXECUTION OF A RELIEF IN PLACE**

15           **15-24.** In situations where the commander desires to conceal the relief from the enemy, such  
16 as during a sequential or staggered relief, the unit receiving the mission to conduct a relief in  
17 place may occupy the same positions as the unit it relieves. Alternatively, it may establish more  
18 favorable positions within the general vicinity of the relieved unit's location. Occupying differ-  
19 ent positions makes early discovery by the enemy more likely. Any increase in activity in for-  
20 ward positions can reveal the relief to the enemy. Friendly reconnaissance, intelligence, sur-  
21 veillance, and target acquisition systems attempt to detect if the enemy can discover the relief  
22 before it can be completed.

23           **15-25.** The enemy can usually detect a relief effort because of the increased activity resulting  
24 from the movement of soldiers and equipment out of position by the relieved unit and into pos-  
25 tion by the relieving unit. Additionally, after any period of combat, there are differences in the  
26 types and amount of equipment between the relieving unit and the relieved unit, even if they  
27 have the same modified table of organization and equipment. These differences can also reveal  
28 the relief to the enemy. The two units establish guidelines for exchanging compatible equipment  
29 and supplies; this limits the existence of these differences. In addition, it may be necessary to  
30 exchange certain weapons, supplies, equipment and, occasionally, vehicles between units.  
31 When major differences in the number of combat systems between the units exist, for example,  
32 a tank-heavy task force relieves a mechanized infantry-heavy task force, inoperable equipment  
33 or visual simulators may assist in hiding the change of units.

**15-26.** In a simultaneous relief, the relieving unit begins moving from its current location to assembly areas in the AO of the unit being relieved. Once the relief begins, all elements involved execute the relief as quickly as possible. Both units are vulnerable to enemy attack because of the concentration, movement, and intermingling of forces in a simultaneous relief. Any unnecessary delay during execution provides the enemy additional time to acquire and engage the forces involved. All units in the AO come under the operational control of the relieving unit commander at the time or the event previously established by the plan for the operation.

**15-27.** As the first relieving element arrives from the assembly area to the position being assumed, it establishes a screen of the relieved unit's positions as the tactical situation permits. The remainder of the relieving unit moves forward to positions behind the unit being relieved. The relieving unit may use the relieved unit's alternative and supplementary defensive positions to take advantage of any previous defensive preparations. At the previously established time or event, passage of command takes place. At that point, if possible, the commander of the relieving unit informs all units involved in the relief of the passage of command.

**15-28.** The relieved unit continues to defend. The relieving unit's advance parties coordinate procedures for the rearward passage of the relieved unit. On order, the relieved unit begins withdrawing through the relieving unit and moves to assembly areas. The relieved unit's crew-served weapons are usually the last elements relieved after giving the relieving unit its range cards. The relieving unit replaces them on a one-for-one basis to the maximum extent possible to maintain the illusion of routine activity. The relieved unit's combat support and logistics assets assist both the relieved unit and the relieving unit during this period.

**15-29.** Artillery units are not normally required to relieve weapon system for weapon system unless the terrain limits the number of firing positions available. Generally, the relieved unit's artillery and other fire support assets remain in place until all other relieved elements displace and are available to reinforce the fires of the relieving unit in case the enemy tries to interfere. If the purpose of the relief is to continue the attack, the artillery of both forces generally remains in place to support the subsequent operation.

**15-30.** One-way main supply routes can simplify the forward and rearward movement of both units. The relieving unit's sustainment command post controls both units' military police and any other traffic management assets. The commander uses these assets to help control unit and convoy movement on lines of communication, main supply routes, and movement routes throughout his AO.

**15-31.** In the future, it is likely that conflicts will involve the relief of an allied force. The commander should consider the following additional points when such reliefs occur:

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- Dissimilar unit organizations may require special adjustments in assigned sectors.
- Control of fire support may require special liaison.
- Language difficulties may require the increased use of guides and translators.
- Use of relieved unit communications will require special signal arrangements and additional operators.
- Ammunition and equipment incompatibility may make exchange of assets more difficult.

"The principal task involved in a passage of lines is the preparation for continuing the attack."

FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations*, 22 May 1941, Paragraph 572

## CHAPTER 16

# PASSAGE OF LINES

**Passage of lines is an enabling operation in which one unit moves through another unit's positions with the intent of moving into or out of enemy**

**contact.** This potentially involves close combat. It involves the transfer of the responsibility for an area of operations between two commanders. That transfer of responsibility usually occurs when roughly two-thirds of the passing force has moved through the passage point. If not directed by higher authority, the time for the passage of command is determined by mutual agreement between the

unit commanders. They disseminate this information to the lowest levels of both organizations.

**16-2.** The commander's reasons for conducting a passage of lines are to:

- Sustain the tempo of an offensive operation.
- Maintain the viability of the defense by transferring responsibility from one unit to another.
- Transition from a delay or security operation by one force to a defense.
- Free a unit for another mission or task.

The headquarters directing the passage of lines is responsible for determining when the passage starts and when it should be completed.

**16-3.** Passage of lines occurs under two basic conditions. **A forward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through a unit's positions while moving toward the enemy. A rearward passage of lines occurs when a unit passes through another unit's positions while moving away from the enemy.** Ideally, a passage of lines does not interfere with the conduct of the stationary unit's operations.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

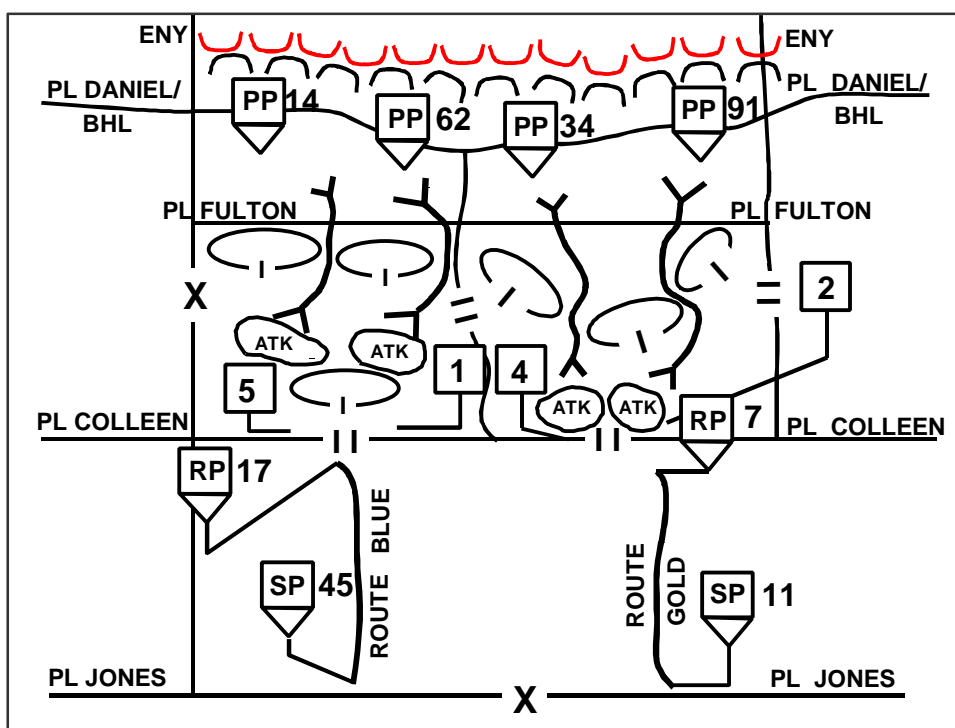
**16-4.** A unit may participate in a passage of lines as either the passing or stationary force. Except for the co-location of command posts and the provision of guides by the stationary force, conducting a passage of lines does not require a special task organization. Both the passing force and the stationary force maintain their previous combat organization during the passage.

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Usually, if the stationary unit has the capability, it is responsible for the conduct of operations against uncommitted enemy forces. However, operations directed against uncommitted enemy forces may be the responsibility of a higher echelon depending on the echelon at which the passage takes place.

**16-5.** A forward passing unit's order of march is generally reconnaissance and security elements first, followed by artillery and combat support units that may have to move early to support the move of the maneuver units. The combat units march next, followed by any remaining combat support and CSS units. The passing unit reverses this order of march in a rearward passage of lines. The stationary unit normally provides the moving unit with guides to expedite the passage. Attack helicopters and air cavalry are useful in providing security.



**Figure 16-1. Example Control Measures Associated with a Forward Passage of Lines**

## CONTROL MEASURES

**16-6.** Control measures associated with a passage of lines are generally restrictive to prevent fratricide. As a minimum, they include the area of operations, assembly areas, attack positions, battle handover line (BHL), contact points, passage points, passage lanes, gaps, routes, and phase lines. The headquarters directing the passage designates or recommends contact points, passage lanes, assembly areas, routes, and start and end times for the passage. All of these con-

trol measures except for passage points, passage lanes, and gaps are discussed elsewhere in this manual. The commander may also include start points, release points, fire coordination measures, such as coordinated fire lines, and any other control measures that he thinks is necessary to conduct this task. (See Figure 16-1.) Unless the two unit's mutual higher headquarters establish the necessary graphical control measures, the stationary unit establishes them for the passage. However, the stationary unit commander must coordinate them with the commander of the passing unit. The stationary unit establishes these measures because it owns the terrain, it knows where the obstacles are, and it knows the tactical plan.

**16-7. A passage point is a specifically designated place where the passing units will pass through the stationary unit.** The location of this

point is where the commander wants subordinate units to physically execute a passage of lines. In a forward passage of lines, the passage point marks the location where the passing unit is no longer bound by the restrictions placed on it by the stationary force. On the other hand, in a rearward passage of lines, the passage point marks the location where the stationary unit can restrict the passing force's movement and maneuver. The graphical control measure for passage point 8 is depicted in Figure 16-2. Between the contact point and the passage point, the stationary unit controls the movement of the passing force.

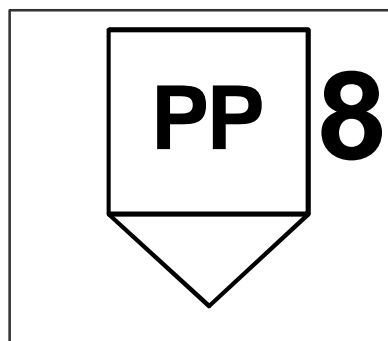


Figure 16-2.  
Passage Point 8

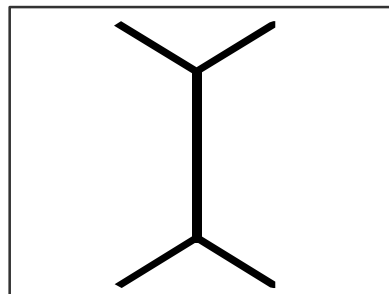


Figure 16-3. Lane

**16-8. A passage lane is a lane through an enemy or friendly obstacle that provides safe passage for a passing force.** The lane may be cleared, including being reduced and proofed, as part of a breach operation, or it may be included as part of the design of a friendly obstacle. It is a clear route all the way through an obstacle. The graphical control measure for a lane is depicted in Figure 16-3.

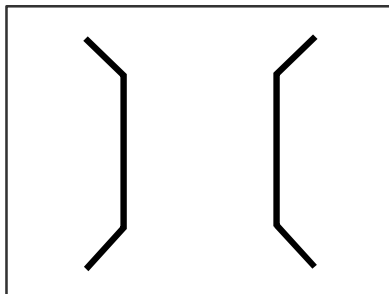


Figure 16-4. Gap

**16-9. Gaps are areas free of armed mines or obstacles whose width and direction allow a friendly force to pass through the area containing obstacles while dispersed in**

**a tactical formation.** The presence of gaps prevents inadvertent concentrations of soldiers and equipment around the entry points of lanes.

### PLANNING A PASSAGE OF LINES

**16-10.** As with any activity involving the transfer of combat responsibility from one unit to another, the complex nature of a passage of lines involves risk. As with other operations, a passage of lines may be categorized as hasty or deliberate. During a passage of lines, the commander normally maintains the established tempo of operations. The sustainment of that established tempo of operations requires the detailed planning and preparation associated with a deliberate passage of lines. In this case, both the stationary and moving force have time to:

- Exchange plans and liaison personnel.
- Conduct briefings and detailed reconnaissance.
- Publish written orders.

A hasty passage of lines is planned and executed from oral or fragmentary orders.

**16-11.** In a passage of lines, the headquarters directing the passage is responsible for designating:

- Subsequent missions for both forces.
- When and under what conditions passage of command takes place.
- Start and finish times for the passage.
- Contact points between the units involved.
- Common maneuver control measures and graphics.

This information is normally established in either the warning order or the order directing the passage. In the absence of higher-echelon guidance, close coordination and understanding between the commanders and staffs of the two units are essential to the smooth conduct of the passage.

**16-12.** The unit commanders plan the passage of lines to maintain enemy contact and provide constant fires on the enemy. Commanders reduce risk and ensure synchronization through detailed planning and decentralized execution. With forces intermingling during the passage of lines, the need for positive control increases. The passage requires close coordination, clearly understood control measures, liaison between all headquarters and echelons involved in the passage, and clear identification of the moment or event that causes one force to assume responsibility for the AO from another.

**16-13.** On receipt of the warning order that directs a passage of lines, the passing unit's commander and key staff representatives generally co-locate with the command post of the stationary unit to facilitate in planning the passage and establishing common situational understanding. If the passing unit cannot co-locate one of its command posts to help plan the passage, it conducts extensive liaison with the stationary unit. The planning focus for both the passing unit and



the stationary unit is on operations following completion of the passage. While this occurs, the two units involved coordinate the following:

- The exchange of intelligence and combat information.
- Current friendly dispositions and tactical plans, especially deception and obstacle plans.
- Direct and indirect fires and close air support (CAS) plans.
- Any necessary maneuver control measures and graphics not directed by the higher headquarters, such as boundary changes, the battle handover line (BHL), emergency CSS points, and assembly area and firing positions for use by artillery, air defense, and other units.
- Both long-range and short-range recognition symbols and vehicle markings to reduce the probability of fratricide.
- When and under what conditions control of the area of operations will transfer from one headquarters to the other, if not previously established.
- Provisions for movement control, including contact points, start and release points, primary and alternate routes, route selection, priorities for the use of routes and facilities, passage points, and the provision for guides.
- Reconnaissance by elements of the passing unit.
- Signal operating instruction (SOI) details, such as call signs, frequencies, and recognition signals for use during the passage.
- Security measures during the passage, including the use of NBC reconnaissance or biological detection systems.
- Fires, obscurants, and any other combat, combat support, and combat service support (CSS) provided by the stationary unit.
- Measures to reduce both units' vulnerability to attack by enemy weapons of mass destruction.
- Operational security measures required before or during the passage.
- Allocation of terrain for use by the passing force.
- Air defense cover — up to and forward of the BHL.
- Logistics support for the passing unit provided by the stationary unit, especially fuel and maintenance.

**16-14.** The fire support staffs of both the stationary and the passing unit must agree on the location of firing positions. These positions must be far enough forward to support the operation without having to redeploy during critical stages of the battle. Normally they are positions that have not been identified by the enemy.

**16-15.** Detailed air defense planning is absolutely essential during a passage of lines. Moving units tend to move slowly and often in some type of column formation during the passage. Vehicle congestion presents a lucrative target to enemy aircraft. In most cases, the stationary air defense elements will be able to protect the passing force, allowing the air defense units supporting the passing force to move with the passing force. Dissemination of early warning and Army airspace command and control (A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup>) information reduces the risk of fratricide to friendly aviation assets while increasing the probability of the timely detection of enemy air. Strict adherence to identification friend-or-foe (IFF) procedures among pilots and air defense fire units

is critical, especially during periods of limited visibility. Local air superiority also reduces the vulnerability of the two forces during periods when congestion cannot be avoided on the ground.

**16-16.** Once a passage of lines begins, it should take place as quickly as possible. Where possible, the operation takes place when the enemy has the least capability to detect it, such as at night or during periods of reduced visibility. In any passage of lines, the use of smoke to screen friendly movement, even at night, is always considered.

**16-17.** The passing unit prefers to conduct the passage through a gap in the stationary unit's position rather than through a lane or a route that traverses the stationary unit's positions. This reduces the vulnerability that results from the concentration of forces when one unit passes directly through the occupied positions of another unit. It also avoids the danger of concentrating the passing unit into passage lanes.

**16-18.** In a forward passage of lines, when there are no gaps through the stationary unit's positions, at least two passage lanes are normally needed for each battalion task force. In a rearward passage of lines, at least one passage lane is needed for each battalion. In both cases, a brigade needs at least one additional lane for the brigade's tactical vehicles. The routes and lanes used provide for the cover, concealment, and rapid movement of the moving force. The commander may designate alternative routes and lanes for elements of the moving force that are contaminated. They should not disrupt the combat capability of the stationary unit. The commander would like additional lanes to speed the process if the terrain and enemy situation allows.

**16-19.** The passing unit normally has priority for use of routes to and within the stationary unit's tactical area of responsibility. Clearance and maintenance of passage routes up to the BHL are the responsibility of the stationary force. The stationary force must provide an obstacle overlay of its obstacles. The passing unit must be prepared to help maintain routes and positions its engineer equipment accordingly. The stationary unit is responsible for traffic control within its AO until the passing unit assumes control. During the passage, the passing unit augments the traffic-control capability of the stationary unit as required.

**16-20.** Based on the commander's concept and intent, the passing force focuses its planning effort on two general areas: coordination with the stationary force and guidance to subordinate units conducting the passage. These planning efforts occur simultaneously. If the enemy attacks during the passage, the plan probably requires modification to prevent hampering friendly maneuver.

**16-21.** Executing a passage of lines successfully requires effective communication between the two units. The commanders build redundancy of communication signals and means into

their passage plans, such as the use of both mobile subscriber equipment and combat net radios. The commanders designate contact points to ensure the existence of effective communication between the two forces at the lowest tactical level.

#### FORWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

**16-22.** The purpose of a forward passage of lines is to move forces forward to conduct operations. It is designed to ensure the maintenance of enemy contact while allowing the relief of previously committed forces. The stationary force must control and secure the area of operations far enough to its front so that the moving force can pass through the stationary force and reform into a combat formation prior to contact with an enemy force. Generally, the stationary unit supports the passing unit until the passing unit masks the stationary unit's direct fires. The stationary unit continues to support the passing force with its fire support systems until the passing unit moves beyond the supporting range of the stationary force. The stationary unit is also responsible for the security of the LD of the forward passing unit until it is able to assume that responsibility. The boundaries of the forward passing force after it completes its passage do not have to coincide with the boundaries of the stationary force. See Figure 16-5.

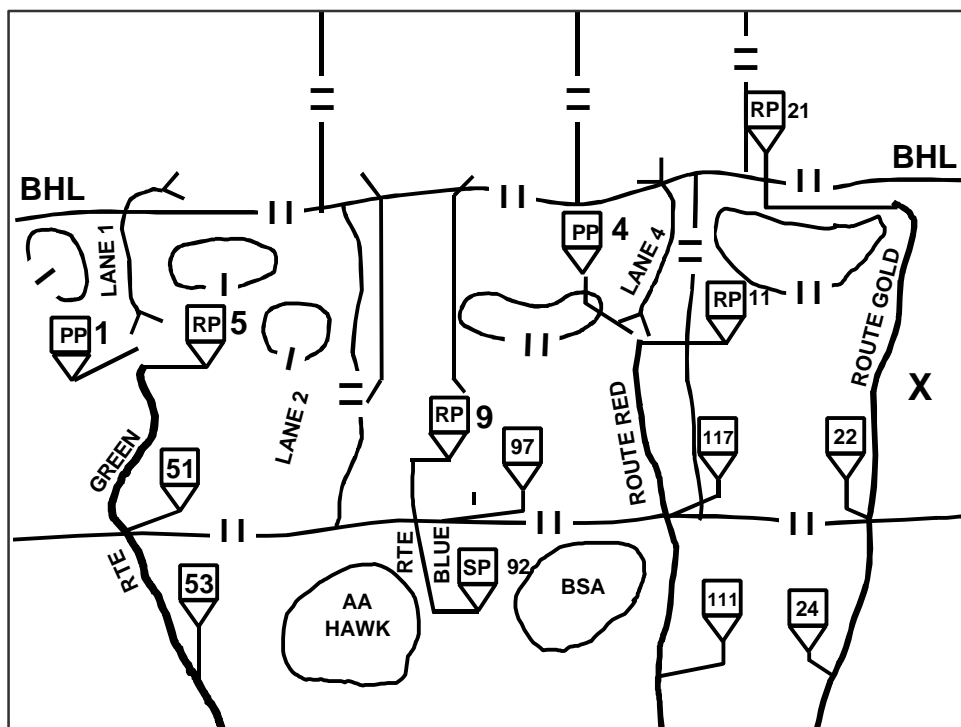


Figure 16-5. Forward Passage of Lines

## 1 PREPARING FOR A FORWARD PASSAGE

2 **16-23.** The passing unit conducts reconnaissance from its current location to its designated  
3 assembly areas, which are generally located to the rear of the stationary unit. After completing  
4 its reconnaissance, the passing unit occupies these assembly areas.

5 **16-24.** The commander should organize the passing force for its subsequent mission before  
6 initiating the forward passage of lines. The passing force avoids regrouping in forward assem-  
7 bly areas or attack positions.

## 8 EXECUTION OF A FORWARD PASSAGE

9 **16-25.** When the passing force moves forward, it should move through the stationary unit  
10 while deployed in a combat formation without a halt. This minimizes the amount of time the  
11 two forces are concentrated in the forward area, which makes them vulnerable to enemy attack.

12 **16-26.** Support by the stationary force ends when the combat elements of the moving force,  
13 including the reserve, have moved beyond direct fire range. However, artillery, air defense, and  
14 other long-range systems may remain to support the passing unit until a previously designated  
15 event occurs or it is directed by a higher headquarters to perform another mission.

16 **16-27.** When executing the forward passage, the passing unit's reconnaissance elements re-  
17 connoiter forward of the release points and establish a screen in front of the passing unit. The  
18 stationary unit continues to conduct aggressive security operations throughout the passage of  
19 lines. The movement of main body forces begins from their assembly areas to attack positions,  
20 where the passing unit conducts its final preparations for the passage of lines and the attack.  
21 The passing unit moves to and occupies attack positions when observation by the enemy is un-  
22 likely. The stationary unit clears any obstacles from designated passage gaps, lanes, or routes,  
23 and guides elements of the passing unit from the contact point through the passage points.

24 **16-28.** The direct and indirect fire assets of the stationary unit normally support the movement  
25 of the passing unit. Any preparatory or covering fires should coincide with the passing unit's  
26 movement from the attack position to the passage lanes. After responsibility is passed to the  
27 forward moving unit commander, he coordinates all fire support. Depending on the situation  
28 at the time, he may continue to use only the fire support assets of the stationary force until the  
29 passage of lines is complete. This allows his own fire support assets to move forward, in the  
30 case of artillery, or remain available to support the continuation of the passing unit's forward  
31 movement, in the case of attack helicopters and close air support. Upon passage of command,  
32 the passing commander also assumes control of fires forward of the BHL. For example, he  
33 moves the CFL forward to conform to the movement of his forward security elements.

**16-29.** The superior headquarters of the forces involved should exercise overall command and control of the passage. In a forward passage, the commander of the passing force normally assumes responsibility for the conduct of operations beyond the BHL once the attack begins. In practice, however, it is useful to complete the transfer of responsibility, including fire support, just prior to starting the operation. During the passage two parallel chains of command are operating in one area at the same time and the possibility of confusion exists. A successful passage of lines requires clear command and control responsibilities. The passing unit's command post passes through the lines and follows the main effort as soon as possible after the lead elements complete their passage.

**16-30.** The stationary unit furnishes to the passing unit any previously coordinated or emergency logistics assistance within its capabilities. These typically include:

- Evacuation of casualties and enemy prisoners of war.
- Refugee control.
- Use of areas and facilities, such as water points and medical facilities.
- Route and traffic control.
- Recovery of disabled vehicles and equipment.

The passing force normally assumes full responsibility for its own CSS support forward of the BHL.

**16-31.** When dissimilar units, such as light infantry and mounted forces, are involved in a passage of lines, the principles involved are the same; however, the execution is different. For example, the type and amount of support provided by the stationary unit will change. In some cases, the higher headquarters ordering the passage needs to provide assets to support the passage.

## REARWARD PASSAGE OF LINES

**16-32.** A rearward passage of lines is similar in concept to a forward passage of lines. It continues the defense or retrograde operation. It maintains enemy contact while allowing for the recovery of security or other forward forces. This operation may or may not be conducted under enemy pressure.

## PLANNING FOR A REARWARD PASSAGE

**16-33.** Planning procedures for a rearward passage of lines closely resemble the planning procedures for a forward passage of lines. However, rearward movement is likely to be more difficult because of the following:

- The enemy will probably have the initiative, which tends to reduce the time available to conduct liaison and reconnaissance and make detailed plans.
- If the rearward moving force has been in action, its soldiers will be tired and possibly disorganized to some degree.
- The enemy may be applying pressure on the passing force.

- Friendly forces may be more difficult to recognize because enemy forces may be intermixed with them.

**16-34.** Close coordination between the two commanders is crucial to the successful execution of the rearward passage and subsequent transfer of responsibility. This requirement for close coordination is even more critical when the tactical situation results in a staggered or incremental rearward passage across an AO. The passing commander relinquishes control of his elements remaining in contact at the time of the transfer of responsibility to the stationary commander. Generally, the stationary unit assumes control of the area of operations forward of the BHL after two-thirds of the passing force's combat elements moves through the passage points.

**16-35.** Upon receipt of the warning order, the passing unit begins coordination and establishes communication with the stationary unit. The commanders of these units coordinate the same details as those outlined for a forward passage of lines. For example, the commander coordinates for fires in support of the rearward passing force. The two staffs coordinate those control measures (see pages 16-2 and 16-3) necessary to support retrograde operations and their associated rearward passage of lines. The commanders establish a probable time to initiate passage. The commander assigns responsibility for the closure and execution of obstacles.

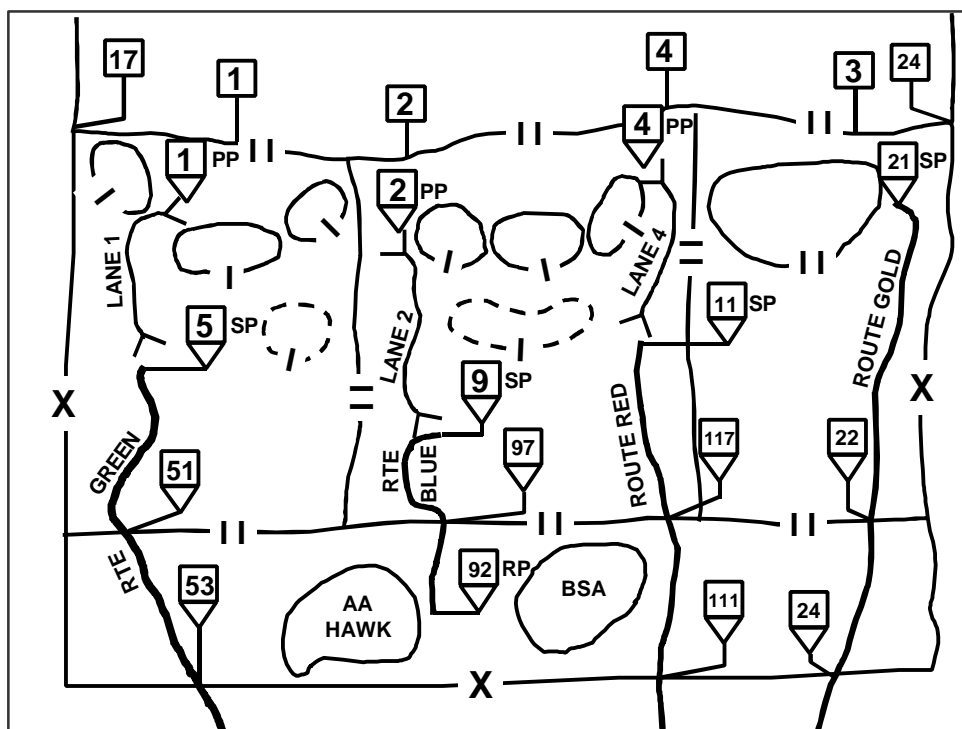
**16-36.** The stationary unit identifies multiple routes through its area of operations and across its rear boundary to assembly areas. The passing unit begins reconnaissance of these routes as soon as possible. The stationary unit must physically show all obstacles, and the routes and gaps through them, to the passing unit. It provides guides for the passing unit — especially through obstacles — and mans contact points and passage points. The passing unit begins to reconnoiter its routes to the established contact points with the stationary unit's troops. The stationary unit establishes a security area in which responsibility transitions from the moving force to the stationary force. Normally, a BHL designates the forward edge of this area. The BHL is within direct fire range and observed indirect fire range of the stationary force.

#### PREPARING FOR A REARWARD PASSAGE

**16-37.** The command posts of both units involved should move to a position where they can co-locate as part of the preparations for the rearward passage. This co-location reduces the risk associated with a passage because it makes it easier to coordinate between the two units. If circumstances prevent the units' command posts from co-locating, then they must exchange liaison teams to ensure thorough coordination. If necessary, fire support assets from the stationary force assets occupy positions forward of their primary positions to give maximum coverage of forces of rearward moving unit.

## EXECUTING A REARWARD PASSAGE

**16-38.** The passing unit maintains command of its subordinate elements throughout the retrograde and rearward passage. However, the passage point marks the location where the passing unit comes under the control of restrictions placed on it by the stationary unit. (See Figure 16-6.) If the enemy continues to press his attack during the passage, the passing unit controls the battle from co-located command posts while the stationary unit monitors and controls the passage of lines until battle handover occurs. The passing unit's command post passes through the lines as soon as possible after the lead elements complete their passage. Upon the passage of command, the stationary unit assumes the defense of the area of operations.



**Figure 16-6. Rearward Passage of Lines**

**16-39.** The stationary unit provides the passing unit with as much assistance as possible. Pivotal to the success of the rearward passage of lines is the provision of indirect and direct fire support by the stationary unit to the passing unit. This is especially important in covering the withdrawal of elements left in contact during a delay. The stationary unit's fire support assets answer calls for fire from the passing unit until battle handover occurs. The passing unit's fire support assets echelon rearward to provide continuous fire support for the passing unit until it successfully disengages. Once the passing unit hands over control of the battle to the stationary

1 unit, it initiates and clears calls for all fires forward of its location. The same procedure applies  
2 to the dedicated air defense assets of the passing and stationary units.

3 **16-40.** The stationary unit's engineer assets provide support to prepare the defense and exe-  
4 cute the passage. Priority of effort initially ensures that the passing unit is able to move through  
5 passage lanes around the stationary unit's defensive positions. It shifts to close these passage  
6 lanes once the passing unit and any security elements disengage and withdraw through the secu-  
7 rity area and obstacles.

8 **16-41.** The stationary unit provides the passing unit with the previously coordinated combat  
9 service support as far forward as possible. The stationary unit concentrates on providing the  
10 passing unit with emergency medical, recovery, and fuel supplies to enable the passing unit to  
11 rapidly move through the stationary unit's positions.



# APPENDICES

**Appendix A:**     *Army Branches and Tactical Echelons*

**Appendix B:**     *Tactical Tasks*

**Appendix C:**     *Airborne and Air Assault Operations*

**Appendix D:**     *Encirclement Operations*



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*“It is not so much the mode of formation as the proper combined use of the different arms which will insure victory.”*

**Jomini: *Precis de l'Art de la Guerre*, 1838**

## Appendix A

# ARMY BRANCHES AND TACTICAL ECHELONS

The Army's flexibility, versatility, and adaptability are based on a broad range of branch capabilities and echelons that can be rapidly tailored for deployment and task-organized for the exact conditions of METT-TC. The Army groups its force structure into three general types: combat, combat support, and combat service support. Each type incorporates diverse capabilities of varying degrees of lethality, deployability, sustainability, and survivability. These capabilities constitute a Total Force consisting of the active component, reserve components, and civilians acting in concert with other services and allies. There are more than 400 types of Army units within the Total Force. Each type complements and reinforces the others and the joint force. Appropriate combinations provide a balanced and versatile force mix, maximizing the commander's freedom of action in virtually any METT-TC condition.

**A-2.** There is no primary or dominant branch or arm. One branch reinforces or complements the effects of another, such as heavy forces in a support-by-fire position reinforcing an assault of light forces with their large-

caliber, direct-fire weapons. Much of a commander's effectiveness during an operation relies on his ability to rapidly reinforce and complement weapon systems effects in symmetrical and asymmetrical ways.

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Figure A-1. Combat Arms Capabilities

## COMBAT ARMS

**A-3. Combat arms are units and soldiers who close with and destroy enemy forces or provide firepower and destructive capabilities on the battlefield.** Combat branches of the US Army include Air Defense Artillery, Armor, Aviation, Engineers, Field Artillery, Infantry, and Special Forces. Figure A-1 lists some types of units that deploy to support operations. Combat arms units are classified as heavy, light, or special operations forces. Combat arms ground maneuver battalions have organic fire support in the form of mortars.

**A-4.** Heavy forces employ a combination of armored and mechanized forces that use their tactical mobility, protection, and firepower to close with and destroy the enemy, seize and hold terrain, and conduct reconnaissance. They consist of armor, mechanized infantry, aviation, and armored cavalry. Heavy forces employ tanks, armored fighting vehicles, attack and utility helicopters, and dismounted infantry to form the nucleus of a combined arms team that delivers mobile, protected firepower to create tremendous shock effect. The combination of mobile, protected firepower with dismounted infantry achieves complementary and reinforcing effects that neither can attain separately.

**A-5.** Light forces close with and destroy the enemy, seize and hold terrain, and gain information. Light forces traditionally include light, airborne, and air assault forces. Light forces are particularly suited to operations in restricted and urban terrain where they have a mobility advantage over heavy forces. Light forces are limited by a relative lack of protection against direct and indirect fires and limited firepower when compared to heavy forces. While light forces may be lifted into engagement areas by truck, helicopter, or airplane, they fight mainly on foot. Depending on the factors of METT-TC, light forces either complement heavy forces and aviation systems or are complemented by them.

**A-6.** Special operations are actions conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military forces to achieve military, diplomatic, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional means. Special operations forces can reinforce, augment, and complement conventional forces, heightening the effectiveness of the total effort. These forces can also conduct independent operations in situations that demand a small, discrete, highly trained force. The five principal missions of special operations forces (SOF) are:

- Unconventional warfare.
- Direct action.
- Special reconnaissance.
- Foreign internal defense.
- Counterterrorism.

Army SOF have five types of units. Army Special Operations Aviation, Rangers, and Special Forces (SF) units are considered as combat arms forces. Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) units are combat support organizations.

## **AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY**

**A-7.** Air Defense Artillery units provide force protection against air and missile threats. Tactical air defense supports the overall objectives of divisions and corps. Air Defense Artillery air and missile defense units protect maneuver forces and vital assets. Divisional ADA units provide short-range air defense (SHORAD) protection for units conducting tactical combat operations. Corps ADA brigades have both SHORAD and high-to-medium altitude air defense (HIMAD) missile defense units to protect corps assets and reinforce divisional ADA units.

**A-8.** Air Defense Artillery units contribute to intelligence and information operations by gathering and disseminating information about the enemy air order of battle. They also contribute by denying the enemy the ability to operate his own reconnaissance and

C<sup>2</sup> aircraft. FM 44-100, *US Army Air Defense Operations*, is the capstone manual for the air defense artillery.

## ARMOR

**A-9.** The tank is the primary offensive ground weapon in mounted warfare. Its firepower, protection from enemy fire, and speed create the shock effect necessary to disrupt or defeat the enemy. Tanks can destroy enemy armored vehicles, infantry, and antitank guided missiles. Tanks can break through suppressed defenses, exploit the success of an attack by striking deep into the enemy's rear areas, and pursue defeated enemy forces. Armored units can also blunt enemy attacks and launch counterattacks as part of a defense.

**A-10.** The primary missions of cavalry units are reconnaissance and security. The cavalry units' ability to find the enemy, develop the situation, and provide the commander with reaction time and security also make them ideal for operating in an economy-of-force role. Cavalry forces can delay an attacking enemy and assist in a withdrawal. There is no capstone manual for armor operations. Doctrine on heavy combined arms echelons is found in FM 71-1, *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team Operations*, 71-2, *Tank and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force Operations*, 71-3, *The Armored and Mechanized Infantry Brigade Operations*, and FM 71-100, *Division Operations*. The capstone manual for reconnaissance operations is FM 100-55, *Combined Arms Reconnaissance*. The capstone manual for cavalry operations is FM 17-95, *Cavalry Operations*.

## AVIATION

**A-11.** The firepower, agility, and speed of Army aviation permit ground commanders to close with and defeat a wide range of enemy forces. Attack helicopters are ideally suited for rapid reaction in decisive, shaping, or sustainment operations and where the terrain restricts or prohibits ground-force occupation. Attack helicopters can influence the battle when ground forces are decisively engaged.

**A-12.** Air cavalry platoons and troops can reconnoiter and maintain surveillance coverage over a much larger area in a shorter period of time than ground platoons and troops, but with less detail on ground features. During security operations air cavalry reconnoiters, screens forward and to the flanks of ground forces, and acts as a rapid-reaction force. Scout helicopters provide a wide range of reconnaissance and security capabilities. Air cavalry scout assets are essential in detecting and identifying enemy forces throughout the battlefield – an important source of real-time battlefield information.

tion — whether acting autonomously or operating with a cavalry organization. On-board radars and digital communications are key in the rapid dissemination of combat information obtained by these systems. Field Manual 1-100, *Army Aviation Operations*, is the capstone manual for aviation doctrine.

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS

**A-13.** Combat-engineer units are task-organized with maneuver units and are integrated into the combined-arms formation. The engineer unit is designed to provide demolition and breaching capabilities to the combined-arms team. The engineer unit also can employ direct-fire weapons systems to aid in employing demolitions and breaching assets. Regardless of the mission, armored engineer vehicles are combat vehicles and provide a significant contribution to the combat power of the entire formation. To accomplish the mission, engineers fire and move under the direction of the formation commander, as necessary, using engineer skills where appropriate. FM 5-100, *Engineer Operations*, is the capstone engineer manual.

**A-14.** When involved in an assault, engineers fight dismounted on the objective, focusing on breaching enemy close-in protective obstacles as well as demolishing fighting positions and dug-in vehicles. Demolition charges produce significant shock-and-concussion effects on defenders, as well as destroying critical positions, munitions, and combat vehicles.

**A-15.** Combat engineers employed on reserve demolition targets in the defense mainly execute the technical procedures necessary to ensure target destruction. However, the engineer demolition party responds to enemy contact. They assist the demolition guard in securing the target by holding it open or gaining time to ensure that it is destroyed. The engineer force may assist in target defense by installing command detonated mines to support the defensive scheme.

**A-16.** Combat-engineer units have a secondary mission to fight as infantry. While engineers fight continually as engineers, employing them as infantry requires serious considerations. Any commander who owns engineers in a command relationship has the authority to employ them as infantry, unless otherwise prohibited. A commander must carefully weigh the gain in infantry strength against the loss of engineer support. Engineers provide far more combat power in their primary mission than when configured as infantry. Stopping the engineer work may reduce the combat power of the commander's entire force. Because of the long-term impact, a commander notifies the next higher HQ when he employs engineers as infantry.

## FIELD ARTILLERY

**A-17.** Field artillery is the commander's principal means for providing indirect fire support to his maneuver forces. Field artillery units can be self-propelled or towed and contain cannon or multiple rocket launchers. Field artillery can neutralize, suppress, or destroy enemy direct fire forces, attack enemy artillery and mortars, and deliver scatterable mines to isolate and interdict enemy forces or protect friendly operations. The commander may use artillery fires to cover key terrain, flanks, obstacles, and dead space to reduce his risk when maneuver forces are not available. Field artillery elements within maneuver organizations serve as the integrating center for all fire support elements. Field artillery units contribute to attacking the enemy throughout the depth of his formations and suppressing enemy air defense systems to facilitate ground and air operations. Artillery fires can provide simultaneous precision strikes of targets at long ranges that cannot be attacked by other means without significant risk. As mobile as the maneuver force it supports, field artillery provides continuous fires in support of the commander's scheme of maneuver. FM 6-20, *Fire Support*, is the capstone artillery manual.

## INFANTRY

**A-18.** The five types of infantry forces are airborne, air assault, light, mechanized, and ranger. Rangers serve as a type of infantry and as special operations forces (SOF). Long-range surveillance units are a specialized form of light infantry. Each type of infantry has its own skills and organizational design, but all share the common mission: "To close with and destroy the enemy." Regardless of their mode of conveyance to the battlefield — aircraft, armored fighting vehicle, truck, or foot — they all serve as a key element of combat power in close combat. There is not a capstone infantry manual. Echelon and unit specific manuals, such as FM 7-7, *The Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad*, FM 7-8, *Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*, FM 7-10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, FM 7-20, *The Infantry Battalion*, FM 7-30, *The Infantry Brigade*, describe infantry operations.

**A-19.** Airborne infantry units have the greatest capability for large-scale force-projection operations. They rapidly deploy over great distances and conduct combined arms parachute or air-landing assaults to seize and secure vital objectives. These units can be projected to virtually any objective area under almost any weather condition. Once on the ground, their capabilities and lethality are similar to other infantry units.



**A-20.** Air assault infantry units have great tactical mobility and train to fight across the range of military operations. Their significant antiarmor capability — coupled with their strategic deployability — makes them well-suited as an early deploying force in contingency operations against heavy forces. They train and fight as a team in combination with artillery and attack and lift aviation. They can penetrate deep into enemy territory to cut LOCs, seize airfields, destroy C<sup>2</sup> nodes, block reinforcing units, or seize key terrain. Because of their agility and mobility, air assault infantry units are well-suited for covering force operations.

**A-21.** Light infantry units can operate effectively in most terrain and weather. They may be the dominant arm in fast-breaking operations because of their rapid strategic deployability. In such cases, they can wrest the initiative early, seize and hold ground, and mass fires to stop the enemy. They are particularly effective in urban terrain, where they can infiltrate and move rapidly to the rear of enemy positions. Their tactical mobility is enhanced through the use of helicopter support and tactical airlift.

**A-22.** Mechanized infantry forces integrate fast, protected mobility; lethal, vehicle-mounted direct and indirect weapon systems; and dismounted infantry skills into an effective fighting system that enhances the striking power of the combined arms force. Mechanized infantry has the same mobility as armor forces, but less firepower and protection. Armor and mechanized infantry train and fight as a team to defeat enemy heavy forces. When equipped with infantry fighting vehicles, mechanized infantry can accompany tanks in mounted assault. The commander must carefully determine if, when, and where his infantry must dismount to accomplish its mission. In the attack mechanized infantrymen can act as fixing forces. They act as pivot points for maneuvering tank-heavy forces in the defense.

## **SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

**A-23.** Special operations usually occur deep in the enemy's sustainment area or in other areas void of conventional maneuver forces. They may infiltrate the territory of hostile states adjacent to the theater of operation. While each special operations action may be tactical, its effects often contribute directly to theater operational or strategic objectives. Special operations may seek either immediate or long-range effects on the conflict. Their capstone manual is FM 100-25, *Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces*.

**A-24.** Army special operations aviation units are specialized aviation assets dedicated to conducting special operations missions. They provide a mix of short-, medium-, and

long-range lift and limited light-attack capabilities to support all principal and collateral mission areas and conduct autonomous special reconnaissance and direct-action missions.

**A-25.** Ranger units are rapidly deployable, airborne-capable, and trained to conduct joint strike operations with or in support of special operations units of all services in any environment. They plan and conduct special military operations to support national policies and objectives. They also conduct direct-action missions to support conventional operations and operate as conventional light-infantry units when integrated with other combined-arms elements. FM 7-85, *Ranger Unit Operations*, is the capstone manual for ranger operations.

**A-26.** Special Forces units are organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations. They conduct all of the principal special operations missions and collateral activities. These missions and activities include:

- Direct action.
- Strategic reconnaissance.
- Unconventional warfare.
- Foreign internal defense.
- Counterterrorism.
- Humanitarian assistance.
- Theater search and rescue.
- Other special activities as directed.

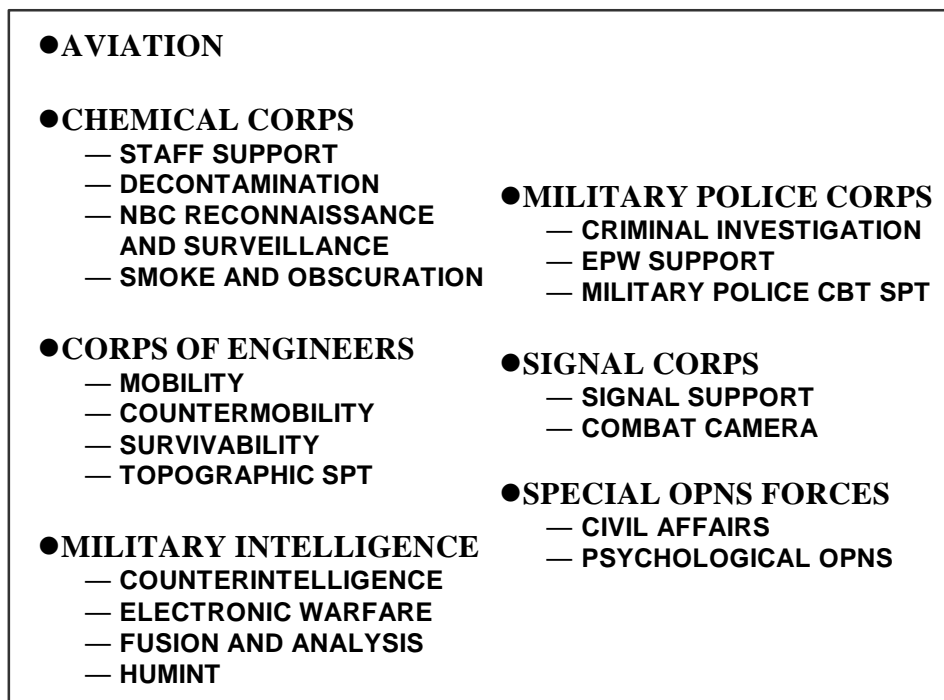


Figure A-2. Combat Support Capabilities

## COMBAT SUPPORT

**A-27.** Combat support forces include units and soldiers that provide critical combat functions in conjunction with combat arms units and soldiers to secure victory. They include Army Aviation, Chemical Corps, Corps of Engineers Military Intelligence, Military Police Corps, Signal Corps, and Special Operations Forces (Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units). Figure A-2 lists some types of combat support units and their capabilities that support tactical operations.

## AVIATION

**A-28.** Army aviation units provide CS to the commander in the following areas:

- Command, control, communications and intelligence.
- Air movement of combat power.
- Aerial delivery of mines.
- Search and rescue.
- Air traffic services.
- Intelligence and electronic warfare.

## CHEMICAL CORPS

**A-29.** The Chemical Corps provides combat support to the US Army through two major activities. First, is the chemical staff support organic from battalion through corps. The integration of organizational equipment and individual technical expertise permits units to continue operations with minimal degradation of capability. Second is the support provided by chemical units found at corps and higher levels including NBC reconnaissance, decontamination, smoke and obscuration, and further staff augmentation. Both activities are critical, the former optimizing unit effectiveness under NBC conditions, the later augmenting and reinforcing unit combat power and sustainability. FM 3-100, *Chemical Operations: Principles and Functions*, is the capstone manual for chemical operations.

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS

**A-30.** Engineers multiply the effectiveness of friendly forces on an intensely lethal battlefield. Four of the five primary engineer functions are combat support. Combat engineers operate as integral member of the combined arms team to provide a full range of mobility, countermobility, survivability, and topographic capabilities. Engineers advise the maneuver commander on the effective use of terrain; construct, improve, and maintain routes, bridges, and airfields; and reorganize to fight as infantry when required.

**A-31.** In offensive operations combat engineers concentrate their efforts to support maneuver by breaching and crossing obstacles, assisting in the assault of fortified positions, and emplacing obstacles to protect the flanks of friendly attacking forces. In defensive operations, engineers reinforce the terrain to anchor the defense in critical areas, minimize the effects of defenders' fires, provide maximum protection to friendly fighting positions, and facilitate the movement of counterattack forces. Topographic engineer units furnish detailed terrain analysis products, maps, and digital terrain data. Topographic engineering products assist the commander with identifying avenues and routes, obstacle locations, engagement areas, unit positions, and possible target areas.

## MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

**A-32.** Military intelligence units provide the commander with early warnings of enemy intentions, intelligence preparation of the battlefield products, aid in the development of his situational understanding, and assist in target development, force protection, and battle damage assessment. They participate in offensive information operations, as well as provide critical counterintelligence support to friendly command force protection programs. FM 34-1, *Intelligence and Electronic Warfare*, is the capstone intelligence manual.

**A-33.** Military intelligence involves four intelligence disciplines — human intelligence (HUMINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT), measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT) — and two multidiscipline intelligence functions — counterintelligence (CI) and technical intelligence (TECHINT). However, rarely will a single discipline or function produce a comprehensive picture of the enemy. Each of these disciplines and functions complement and cue each other. Each discipline or function produces bits and pieces of information that analysts synthesize to approach the total enemy picture. The commander should test information gained by one discipline or means by another discipline or means when the situation permits. This also minimizes chances for enemy deception.

## MILITARY POLICE CORPS

**A-34.** Military Police units provide the commander with a versatile, responsive force capable of performing a wide range of combat, combat support, and combat service support missions. These missions include:

- **Maneuver and Mobility Operations.** MP units enhance maneuver and mobility by expediting and monitoring the flow of personnel and materials throughout the depth and breadth of the battlefield.

- Area Security Operations. MP units are suited to provide security to critical personnel and facilities within their assigned area of operation because of their tactical mobility, firepower, and communications capabilities.
- Internment and Resettlement Operations. MP units conduct internment and resettlement operations for US military prisoners, enemy prisoners of war, and refugees to relieve the tactical commander of the burden they impose.
- Police Intelligence Operations. MP units collect, analyze, and disseminate police intelligence aiding commanders in identifying and defeating threats from criminals, saboteurs, and terrorists.
- Law and Order Operations. MP units assist the commander in the maintenance of law and order both in garrison and the field.

Military police units perform these operations independently or in combination with other units. FM 19-1, *Military Police Support for the AirLand Battle*, is the capstone MP manual.

## SIGNAL CORPS

**A-35.** The signal corps provides worldwide information systems and networks for real-time command and control of Army, joint, and multinational forces. Signal corps units enable effective control systems to operate. In force-projection operations, signal units make split-based operations possible through the employment of satellite downlink equipment. FM 24-1, *Signal Support in the AirLand Battle*, is the capstone signal manual.

## SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

**A-36.** Civil affairs units conduct activities that establish, maintain, influence, and support the commander's relationship with civil authorities and the civilian population. Civil affairs forces enhance the relationships between military forces and civilian authorities and populations in friendly, neutral, or hostile areas of operation. Civil affairs provide opportunities to use local human and material resources to support the assigned mission. Civil affairs forces facilitate military operations by reducing civilian interference with military operations and gaining popular understanding, support, and compliance with measures required to accomplish the mission. In the aftermath of combat, civil affairs units conduct activities that stabilize disrupted areas and consolidate operational objectives. When given the mission, they create a military government to temporarily control institutions, populations, and resources. Civil affairs functional specialties include:

- Civil Defense.
- Labor.
- Legal.
- Public Administration.

- Public Education.
- Public Finance.
- Public Health.
- Public Safety.
- Public Welfare.
- Civilian Supply.
- Economics and Commerce.
- Food and Agriculture.
- Property Control.
- Public Communications.
- Transportation.
- Public Works and Utilities.
- Arts, Monuments, and Archives.
- Civil Information.
- Cultural Affairs.
- Dislocated Civilians.

FM 41-10, *Civil Affairs Operations*, is the capstone manual for civil affairs operations.

**A-37.** Psychological operations are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. Psychological operations units provide the commander with the ability to communicate information to non-US audiences via radio, television, leaflets and loudspeakers. The PSYOP soldier's language skills, regional orientation, and knowledge of communication media provide a means of delivering critical information to host-nation, neutral, and enemy audiences. Joint direction from the operational-level commander characterizes PSYOP. United States laws prohibit the use of PSYOP against US citizens or organizations. FM 33-1, *Psychological Operations*, is the capstone PSYOP manual.

## COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

**A-38.** The primary role of Army tactical combat service support (CSS) units is to sustain Army forces. The CSS effort is successful only when it concentrates and supports forces by focusing on the sustainment and reconstitution of tactical units. Warfare consumes massive amounts of resources. The CSS system must provide resources in a way that minimizes constraints on the commander. Tactical-level CSS support must be responsive. Figure A-3 illustrates CSS branch capabilities.

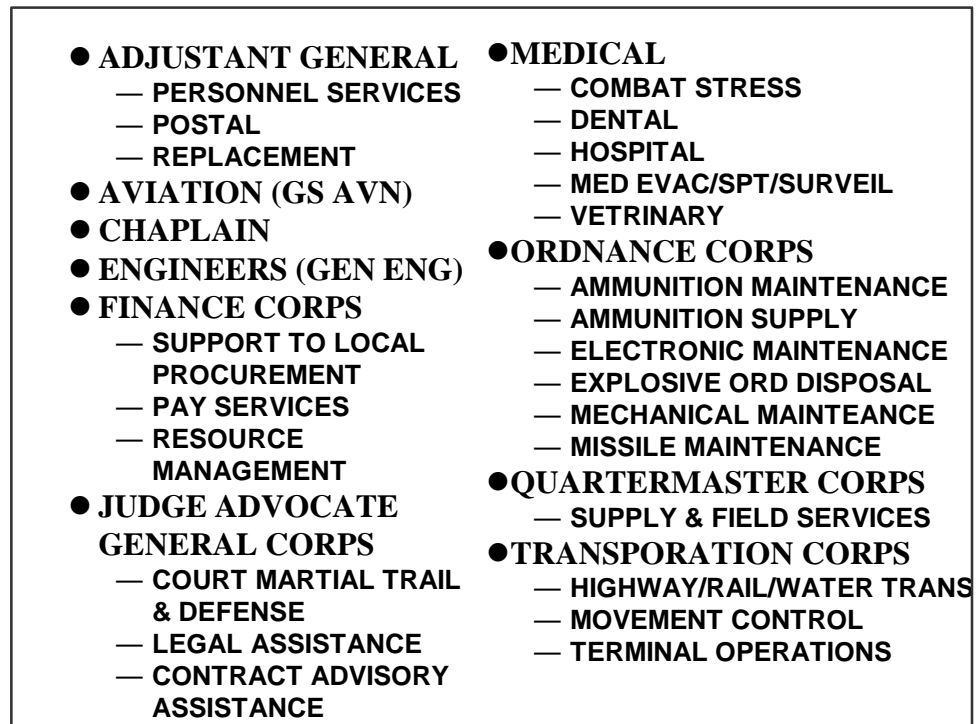


Figure A-3. Combat Service Support Capabilities

### ADJUTANT GENERAL CORPS

**A-39.** The Adjutant General Corps helps to build and sustain combat readiness through planning, operating, and managing all military personnel activities. The following functions are required to perform this mission: Personnel Services, Personnel Strength Management, Personnel Management, Automation, Band Operations, and Postal Operations. Field Manual 12-6, *Personnel Doctrine*, is the capstone manual for military personnel activities.

### AVIATION

**A-40.** CSS Aviation units sustain combat forces primarily through air movement of personnel, supplies, and equipment ; performing aeromedical evacuation and aviation maintenance. CSS air movement missions include:

- Over-the-shore logistics operations.
- Aerial preplanned and immediate resupply.
- Air movement of critically short/sensitive supplies.
- Pre-positioning and movement of fuel and ammunition.
- Air movement of security forces.

## CHAPLAIN CORPS

**A-41.** The chaplain corps provides religious and moral counseling support to soldiers. Chaplains assist in reducing the rate and severity of psychiatric casualties by working with combat stress teams. Field Manual 16-1, *Religious Support*, is the capstone doctrinal manual for chaplains and chaplain assistants.

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS

**A-42.** Sustainment engineering is the primary CSS engineer function. It involves a wide variety of roles, such as civil engineering, power generation, fire fighting, and managing inland waterways.

## FINANCE CORPS

**A-43.** The Finance Corps provides a commander the following financial support:

- Military pay support for his soldiers.
- Civilian pay for all DOD and local hire civilians.
- Computation and disbursement of travel allowances.
- Payments to commercial vendors to acquire military needs on an immediate or recurring basis.
- Disbursements of public funds necessary to support the presence of the US Army on an area-support basis.
- Accounting and disclosure of expended funds.

Field Manual 14-100, *Financial Management Operations*, is the capstone doctrinal manual for financial support.

## MEDICAL

**A-44.** The Army's health care team provides all types of medical support to the commander and his soldiers. The Army's health care team comprises six medical corps: Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Medical Service Corps, Nurse Corps, Veterinary Corps, and Medical Specialist Corps. Field Manual 8-10, *Health Service Support in a Theater of Operations*, is the capstone doctrinal manual for health service support.

## ORDNANCE CORPS

**A-45.** Ordnance Corps units sustain the commander's weapon systems, ammunition, missiles, and ground-mobility materiel. Ordnance soldiers are trained in the repair and management of tank-automotive/ground-mobility materiel, missile materiel, and ammunition materiel, including explosive ordnance disposal. There is no capstone manual that addresses all the activities of the ordnance corps.



## QUARTERMASTER CORPS

**A-46.** The Quartermaster Corps arranges for or provides supplies, materiel management, distribution, procurement and field services to support and sustain soldiers, units and their equipment. This includes:

- Class I- Food, rations, and water
- Class II- Clothing
- Class III- Petroleum, oils, and lubricants
- Class IV- Fortification and barrier materials
- Class V- Ammunition
- Class VI Personal items
- Class VII- Major end items
- Class VIII- Medical supplies, minimal amounts
- Class IX- Repair parts
- Class X- Miscellaneous supplies

The Quartermaster Corps also handles and manages individual and organizational clothing and equipment, field services including laundry and clothing exchange, fabric repair, graves registration, parachute packing, maintenance, and aerial delivery of supplies and equipment. Field Manual 10-1, *Quartermaster Principles*, is the capstone manual for quartermaster units.

## TRANSPORTATION CORPS

**A-47.** The Transportation Corps provides transportation services to the commander. These services include:

- Performing transportation unit operations, to include truck, boat, rail and trailer/cargo transfer operations. Planning, scheduling, and supervising the use of each mode of transportation for the effective movement of personnel and cargo.
- Providing terminal services for all modes of transportation and stevedoring services at fixed ports and unimproved beach sites.
- Providing transportation engineering services.
- Providing direct (DS/GS) maintenance and supply for marine and rail equipment.

Field Manual 55-1, *Transportation Operations*, is the capstone doctrinal manual for the transportation corps.

## TACTICAL ECHELONS

**A-48.** The broad array of Army capabilities is echeloned to perform diverse functions. These functions vary with the type of unit and, particularly at echelons above corps, with the organization of the theater, the nature of the conflict, and the number of friendly forces committed to the effort. For a discussion of echelons above the corps level to include Army Force (ARFOR), Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC), and

Joint Task Force (JTF) see FM 100-5, *Operations*, and FM 100-7, *Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations*.

**A-49.** At each echelon, the commander task organizes his available capabilities to accomplish the mission. The commander's purpose in task organization is to maximize subordinate commanders' abilities to generate a combined arms effect consistent with the concept of operations. Commanders and staffs work to ensure that the capabilities are distributed to the appropriate components of the force, weighting the decisive operation. The relationships between units within and supporting an echelon are described in terms of command and support relationships. (See FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, for a discussion of these relationships.)

#### **COMPANIES, BATTERIES, AND TROOPS**

**A-50.** Company-sized units consist of two or more platoons, usually of the same type, with a headquarters and a limited capacity for self-support. Companies and air defense and artillery batteries are the basic elements of battalions; armored, light, and air cavalry troops are the basic elements of squadrons. Companies, batteries, and troops may also be assigned as separate units of brigades and larger organizations. Some companies, such as Special Forces companies, have subordinate detachments instead of platoons which are organized and trained to operate independently for extended periods.

**A-51.** Company-sized close combat units can fight in mass or by subordinate platoons. In attack helicopter battalions, companies fight as integral units. Cavalry troops fight more frequently with their platoons in separate areas. In infantry and armor battalions, companies fight either as integral units or as task-organized teams reinforced with close-combat platoons of the same or different types and with supporting squads or platoons, such as short range air defense and ground surveillance radar teams. Company teams are task-organized for a specific mission. Such teams can match capabilities to missions with greater precision. However, the attachment of different units at the company level demands thorough training to achieve the maximum complementary effects. Whenever possible, platoons and detachments should train together before they are committed.

**A-52.** Field artillery (FA) batteries are the basic firing units of FA battalions. They are organized with firing platoons, a headquarters, and limited support sections. They may fire and displace together or by platoons. Normally, batteries fight as part of their parent battalion. They are attached occasionally to other batteries or FA battalions. In some cases they respond directly to a maneuver battalion or company. Multiple launch

rocket system (MLRS) batteries more often operate independently. Armored cavalry squadrons have organic howitzer batteries.

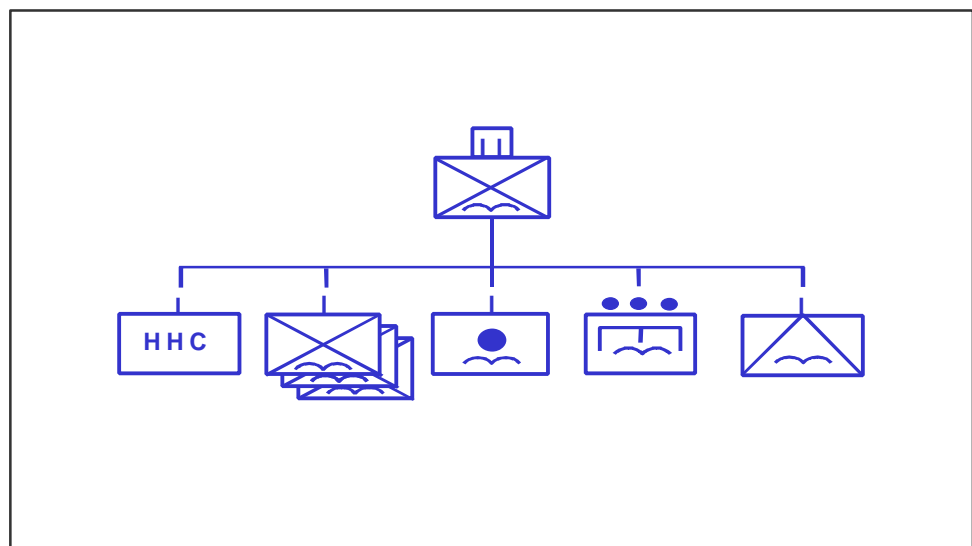
**A-53.** Air defense artillery (ADA) batteries operate as the fighting elements of ADA battalions or, if they are short-range air defense (SHORAD) batteries, in direct support of maneuver brigades or battalions. Separate SHORAD batteries exist in separate brigade-sized organizations.

**A-54.** Combat engineer companies control three or four engineer platoons. Their parent battalion may employ them in a variety of tasks, or they may support maneuver brigades or battalions. Separate brigades and armored cavalry regiments usually have an assigned combat engineer company.

**A-55.** Most CS and CSS units organize as separate companies with greater self-sustainment capabilities than normally found in comparable size combat arm organizations. However, they may receive unit level sustainment support on an area basis. Such CS and CSS companies vary widely in size, employment, and assignment.

#### BATTALIONS AND SQUADRONS

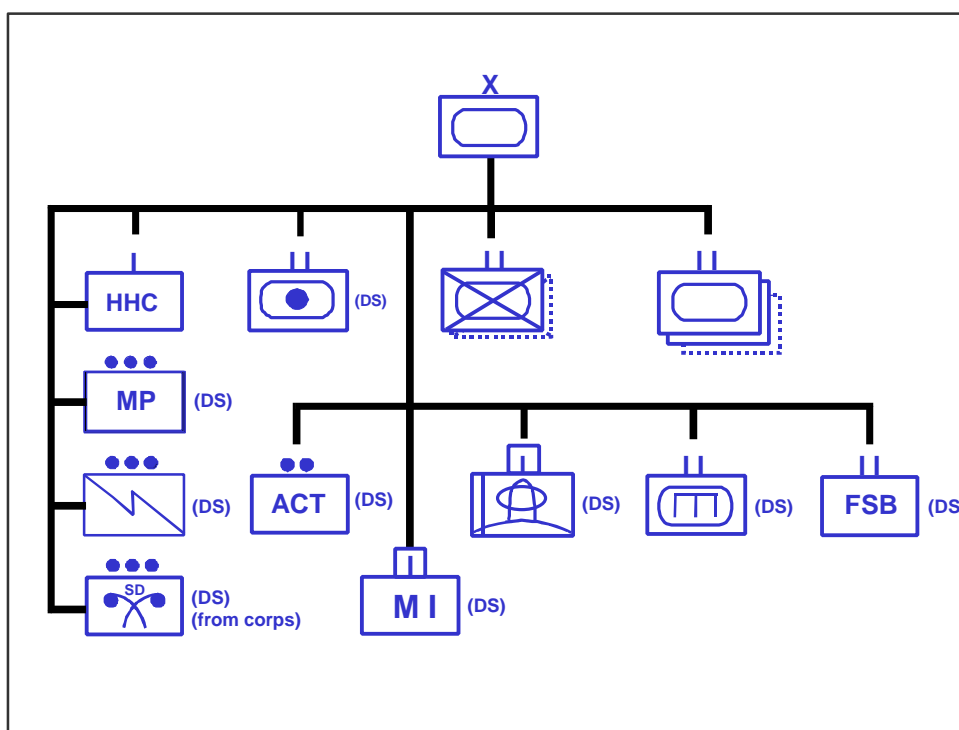
**A-56.** Battalions and cavalry squadrons consist of two or more company-, battery-, or troop-sized units and a headquarters. Most combat arm battalions are organized by branch, arm, or service and, in addition to their line companies, contain a headquarters company that gives them the ability to perform some administrative and logistic services. Typically, battalions have three to five companies in addition to their headquarters.



**Figure A-4. Example Airborne Battalion-size Task**

**A-57.** The commander can reinforce his maneuver battalions with other combat and combat support companies to form task forces for special missions. Task organization increases the capability of maneuver battalions. For example, a brigade commander, based on his understanding of the factors of METT-TC, may task-organize tank, mechanized infantry, and light infantry battalions by cross-attaching companies between these units. (See Figure A-4.) FA battalions can be reinforced with batteries of any kind to form artillery task forces. The commander can reinforce engineer battalions with the same or different types of engineer companies and platoons to form engineer task forces.

**A-58.** Combat support and CSS battalions vary widely in type and organization. They may be separate division or nondivisional battalions, performing functional services for a larger-supported unit within that unit's area of operations. All battalions are capable of limited, short-term self-defense. ADA and signal battalions assigned to or supporting divisions routinely operate throughout the division area of operations. Their commanders also perform the additional duties of division special staff officers.



**Figure A-5. Heavy Brigade Combat Team**

**BRIGADES, REGIMENTS, AND GROUPS**

**A-59.** Brigade-size units control two or more battalions or squadrons. Their capacity for independent action varies by type. A commander can use separate infantry, armor, FA, ADA, engineer, and aviation brigades and armored cavalry regiments to reinforce corps or divisions and shift these units from one division or corps to another to tailor forces for combat. (See Figure A-5.)

**A-60.** Maneuver brigades are the major combat units of divisions; they can employ any combination of maneuver battalions. Division commanders adjust the organization of their brigades and change their task organization into brigade combat teams as required by the factors of METT-TC. They normally receive support from FA battalions, engineer battalions (heavy divisions), forward support battalions, and smaller combat, combat support, and CSS units. Brigades combine the efforts of their battalions and companies to fight engagements and battles and to perform tactical tasks within division-level battles and engagements. Their chief tactical responsibility is synchronizing the plans and actions of their subordinate units to accomplish tasks for the division or corps.

**A-61.** Separate maneuver brigades and armored cavalry regiments have a fixed organization with organic cavalry, engineer, air defense, field artillery, military intelligence, chemical, and CSS units. The commander can use separate brigades and armored cavalry regiments to reinforce corps or divisions, but they are capable of operating as independent units.

**A-62.** The commander organizes other combat, combat support, and CSS brigades and groups to control capabilities for divisions, corps, and larger units. Engineer, ADA, signal, aviation, MP, and transportation brigades are typical of such units. They may also be the building blocks of large unit support structures, such as corps and theater army support commands, and of combat support commands, such as engineer commands. When the span of control for a brigade exceeds seven-battalion size subordinate units, the commander can establish a group headquarters under the brigade as an intermediate headquarters for two or more CS and CSS battalions. Divisions are supported by an organic brigade-sized division artillery (DIVARTY), an aviation brigade, and a division support command (DISCOM) of CSS battalions and companies. Heavy divisions have an organic engineer brigade.

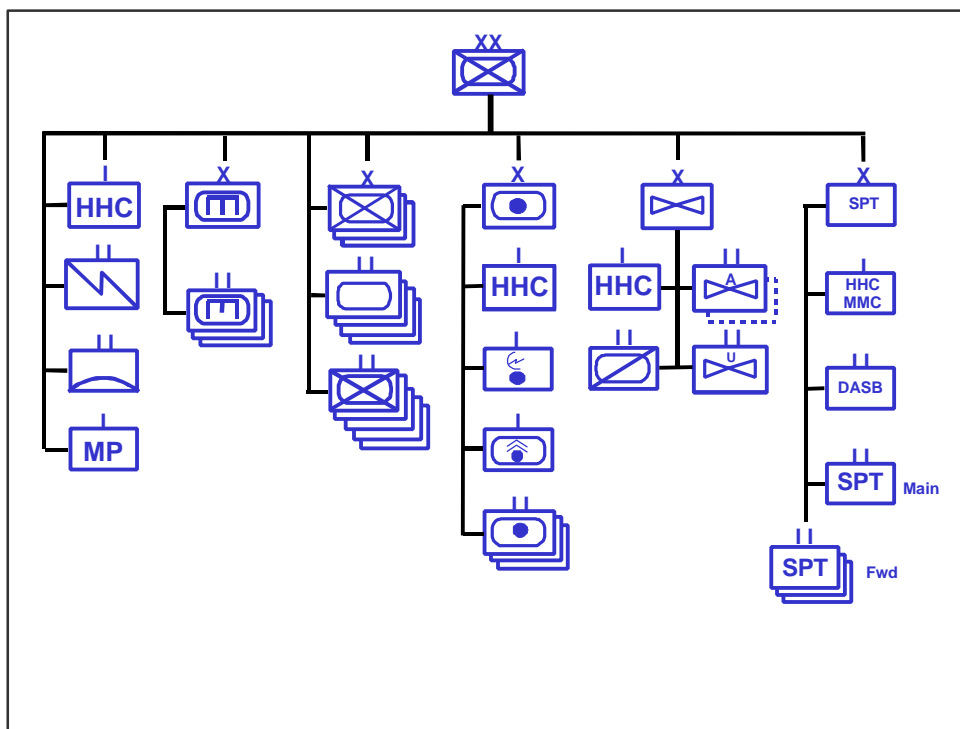
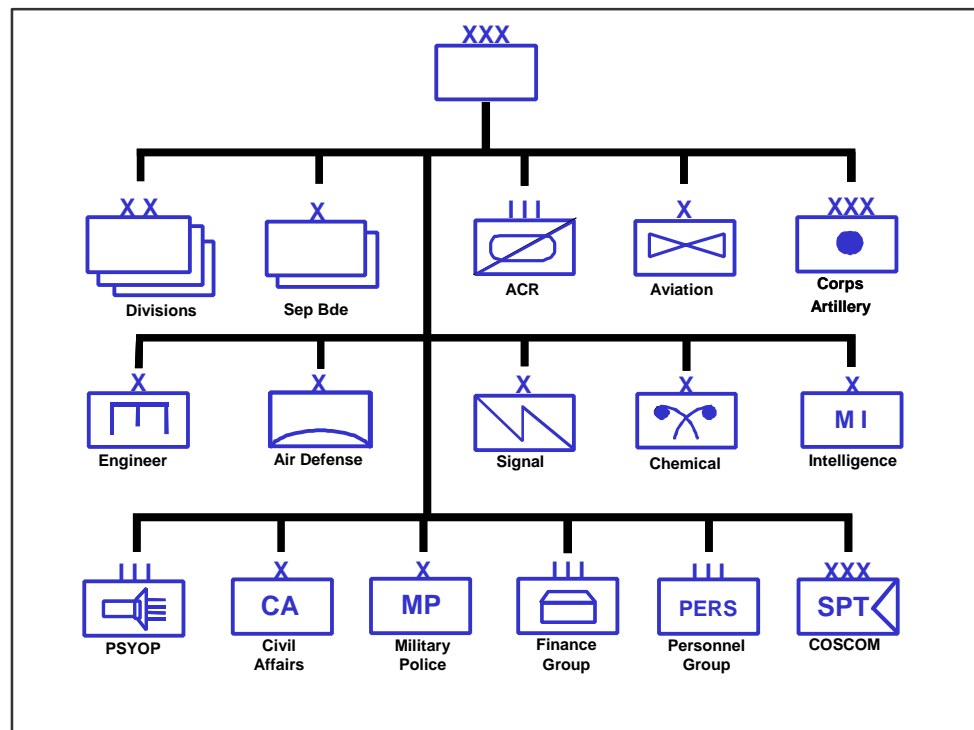


Figure A-6. Heavy Division

## DIVISION

**A-63.** The division possesses great flexibility. Divisions are the largest fixed organizations in the Army that train and fight as tactical teams, and are organized with varying numbers and types of combat, CS, and CSS units. Their commanders task organize their organic brigades and attached forces for specific combat missions. Their combat support and CSS battalions and separate companies may be attached to or placed in support of brigades for particular missions. (Figure A-6 depicts a heavy division's organic elements.) They are capable of performing any tactical mission over a wide range of environments and are designed to be largely self-sustaining. Army division types include armored, mechanized infantry, light infantry, airborne, and air assault.

**A-64.** Divisions perform major tactical operations for the corps and conduct sustained engagements. A corps or a numbered army may direct a division to perform tasks of operational importance. These may include exploiting tactical advantages to seize objectives in depth, moving to gain contact with enemy forces, or moving by air to seize positions behind an enemy force. With significant augmentation, a division headquarters has a limited capability to perform as an Army force (ARFOR) or a joint task force (JTF) headquarters.



**Figure A-7. Representative Corps Organizational Diagram**

## CORPS

**A-65.** Corps are the Army's largest tactical units and the instruments which higher echelons of command conduct maneuver at the operational level. There is no standard organizational structure for a corps, although every corps typically has the components in Figure A-7. Higher headquarters tailor corps to the theater and mission for which they are deployed. Once tailored a corps contains all the combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities required to sustain its operations for an extended period.

**A-66.** A corps is normally tailored to comprise two to five divisions of any type and combination required by the theater and the mission. They possess organic support commands and are assigned combat and combat support organizations based on their needs for a specific operation. Armored cavalry regiments and FA, engineer, ADA, and aviation brigades are the nondivisional units commonly available to the corps to weight its decisive operations and to perform special combat functions. The commander may also assign separate infantry or armor brigades to corps. Signal brigades, MI groups, and MP groups are the combat support organizations normally present in a corps.

**A-67.** A corps plans and conducts battles and major operations. Corps operations are combined arms operations that synchronize tactical activities, including the maneuver of divisions, the fires of artillery units and supporting aerial forces, and the actions of combat support and CSS units. A corps normally operates under the control of a higher echelon such as a numbered army, as land components of a unified or subunified command, or as the Army forces (ARFOR) of a JTF. Corps may also be employed alone as an independent ground force or as the land component of a joint task force. A corps commander may serve as a JTF commander. Corps may exercise operational and tactical responsibilities when employed independently. They may have a key role in translating strategic and operational objectives of higher echelons into the specific and detailed tactics used to achieve those objectives.

**A-68.** Critical corps roles in the planning, preparation, execution, and assessing of distributed operations include:

- Planning and executing operations with other elements of the joint force.
- Integrating available joint, multinational, and interagency assets, such as intelligence, and target acquisition — target attack, electronic warfare (EW), suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD), and CSS.



*“Doctrine provides a military organization with a common philosophy, a common language, a common purpose, and a unity of effort.”*

GEN George H. Decker, address at Fort Leavenworth, 16 Dec 1960

## Appendix B

# TACTICAL MISSION TASKS

The tactical mission tasks in this appendix describe the results or effects the commander wants to achieve, the *what* or *why* of a mission statement. These tasks have specific military definitions that are different from those found in a dictionary. In some cases, the discussion includes more than just a definition, it includes results or effects in relation to the enemy, terrain, or friendly forces not associated with any specific type or form of an operation.

**B-2.** As shown in Figure B-1, there is no definitive list of words or terms to describe the *what* and *why* of a mission statement. The commander is not limited to the tactical tasks listed in this appendix in specifying what actions he wants from his subordinates in an OPORD or OPLAN. Many of the words and terms used to describe the *what* and *why* of a mission statement do not have special connotations beyond their common English language meanings. However, both the commander and the subordinate must have a common understanding of the *what* and *why* of the operation.

**B-3.** The commander must ensure that the missions he assigns his subordinate units are consistent with his scheme of maneuver and the resources allocated to his subordinates. For example, a defending unit requires far greater effort (resources) to destroy an enemy force than to defeat it. Likewise, an attacking unit requires more combat power to clear the enemy from a given area than to contain him.

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**B-4.** Many of the tactical tasks in this appendix have a tactical mission graphic associated with them. These graphics are used in conjunction with course of action development; they are not used on operational overlays.

<b>PURPOSE (EFFECTS ON ENEMY)</b>		<b>ACTIONS BY FRIENDLY FORCES</b>	
<b>BLOCK</b>	<b>FIX</b>	<b>ATTACK BY FIRE</b>	<b>OCCUPY</b>
<b>CANALIZE</b>	<b>INTERDICT</b>	<b>BYPASS</b>	<b>OVERWATCH</b>
<b>CONTAIN</b>	<b>ISOLATE</b>	<b>CLEAR</b>	<b>REDUCE</b>
<b>DEFEAT</b>	<b>NEUTRALIZE</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>	<b>RETAIN</b>
<b>DESTROY</b>	<b>PENETRATE</b>	<b>COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE</b>	<b>SECURE</b>
<b>DISRUPT</b>	<b>TURN</b>	<b>DISENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>SEIZE</b>
		<b>EXFILTRATE</b>	<b>SUPPORT BY FIRE</b>
		<b>FOLLOW AND ASSUME</b>	<b>SUPPRESS</b>
		<b>FOLLOW AND SUPPORT</b>	
<b>TYPES AND FORMS OF OPERATIONS USED AS TASKS*</b>			
<b>MOVEMENT TO CONTACT</b>		<b>AREA DEFENSE</b>	
Search and Attack		<b>MOBILE DEFENSE</b>	
<b>ATTACK</b>		<b>RETROGRADE OPERATIONS</b>	
Ambush		Delay	
Demonstration		Withdrawal	
Feint		Retirement	
Raid		<b>RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS</b>	
Spoiling Attack		<b>SECURITY OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>EXPLOITATION</b>		<b>INFORMATION OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>PURSUIT</b>		<b>COMBINED ARMS BREACH OPERATIONS</b>	
<b>FORMS OF OFFENSIVE MANEUVER</b>		<b>PASSAGE OF LINES</b>	
Envelopment		<b>RELIEF IN PLACE</b>	
Frontal Attack		<b>RIVER CROSSING OPERATIONS</b>	
Infiltration		<b>TROOP MOVEMENTS</b>	
Penetration		Approach March	
Turning Movement		Road March	

\*Discussed Elsewhere in the Manual

**Figure B-1. Examples of Tactical Tasks**

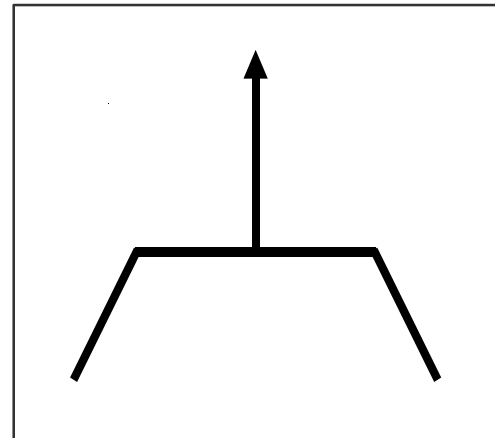
#### **ATTACK BY FIRE** (Action by friendly force)

**B-5. Attack by fire is a tactical task in which a commander uses direct fires, supported by indirect fires, to engage an enemy without closing with him to destroy, suppress, fix, or deceive him.** A commander normally employs this task when the mission does not dictate or support close combat and occupation of a geographical objective by another friendly force. The commander may assign the force conducting an attack by fire a battle position with either a sector of fire or an engagement area, or he may assign it an axis of advance and a force-oriented objective.

The enemy may be stationary or moving. Figure B-2 shows the tactical mission graphic for attack by fire.

**B-6.** An attack by fire closely resembles the task of support by fire. The chief difference is that one unit conducts the support by fire task to support another unit so it can maneuver against the enemy. The attack by fire task includes:

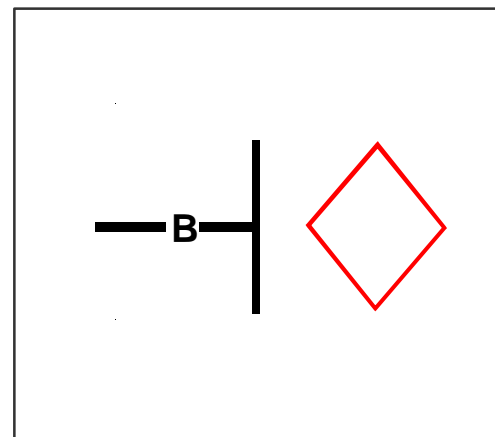
- Assignment of sectors of fire or engagement areas to each subordinate weapon system to ensure complete coverage of the enemy's defensive positions or avenues of approach.
- Designation of control measures to allow the massing, distributing, and shifting of direct and indirect fires.
- Battle positions, area of operations, or axis of advance to allow positioning to engage the enemy.
- Security and all-around defense, including control measures to ensure tie-in of subordinate elements and maximum use of hide positions.
- OPSEC to deceive the enemy about movement, occupation, and intent of the operation.
- Reconnaissance, preparation of routes, security of movement routes and firing positions before the movement of the main body, and stocking Class V items.
- Movement instructions to the initial battle positions.



**Figure B-2. Attack by Fire Tactical Mission Graphic**

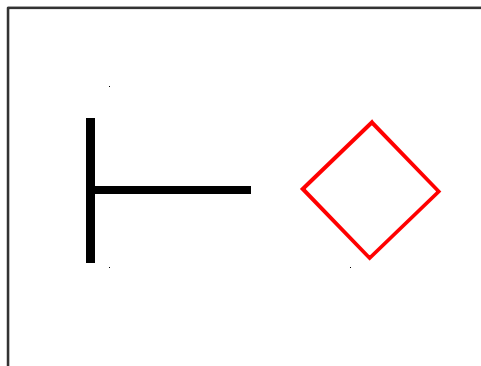
## **BLOCK** (Effect on the enemy)

**B-7. Block is a tactical task that denies the enemy access to an area or prevents his advance in a direction or along an avenue of approach.** A blocking task normally requires the friendly force to block the enemy force for a certain time period or until a specific event has occurred. A blocking unit may have to hold terrain and become decisively engaged. The ends of the vertical line indicate the limit of enemy advance. Figure B-3 illustrates the tactical mission graphic for a blocking task.



**Figure B-3. Block Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-8. Block is also an engineer obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach or prevent him from passing through an engagement area.** The ends of the vertical line in the obstacle effect graphic indicate the limit of enemy advance and where the obstacle ties in to restricted terrain. Figure B-4 illustrates the block



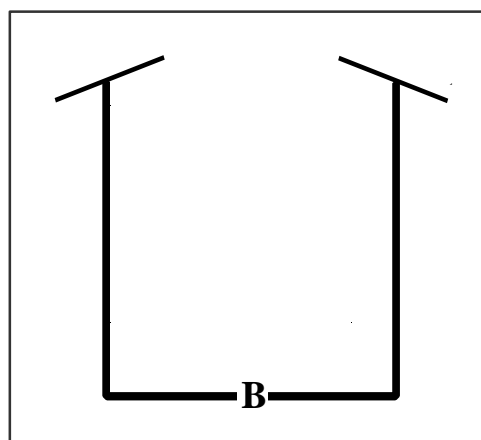
**Figure B-4. Block Obstacle Effect Graphic**

obstacle effect graphic. A blocking force may employ blocking obstacles to assist in the task. Blocking obstacles are complex, employed in depth, and integrated with fires to prevent the enemy from proceeding along an avenue of approach or to proceed only at unacceptable cost. When employed, blocking obstacles should serve as a limit, beyond which the enemy will not be allowed to go. Obstacles by themselves cannot accomplish a blocking task. FM 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, describes the block engineer obstacle effect.

**B-9.** Block as a tactical task differs from the tactical task of fix because a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the obstructed one while a fixed enemy force cannot move in any direction.

## BREACH

**B-10. Breach is a tactical task in which any means available are employed to break through or secure a passage through an enemy defense, obstacle, minefield, or fortification.** To maintain his tempo and momentum, a commander attempts to bypass and avoid obstacles and enemy defensive positions to the maximum extent possible. Breaching either enemy defenses and obstacle systems is normally



**Figure B-5. Breach Tactical Mission Graphic**

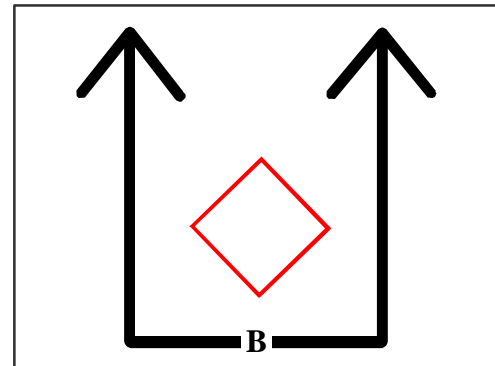
his last choice. When they occur, they are a synchronized combined arms operation

under the control of the maneuver commander. There are four types of breaching operations: *in-stride*, *deliberate*, *assault*, and *covert*. The type of breach conducted depends on the nature of the obstacle and the capabilities of the enemy force covering the obstacle. The control graphic for a breach is shown in Figure B-5. Field Manual 90-13-1, *Combined Arms Breaching Operations*, gives detailed information concerning the conduct of breaching operations.

### **BYPASS** (Action by friendly force)

**B-11. Bypass is a tactical task in which the commander directs his unit to maneuver around an obstacle, position, or enemy force to maintain the momentum of the operation while deliberately avoiding combat with an enemy force.** A

commander orders a bypass so that all combat power is directed toward mission accomplishment. A bypass can take place in offensive or defensive actions. Figure B-6 shows the tactical mission graphic for a bypass.



**Figure B-6. Bypass Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-12.** The decision to bypass is based on:

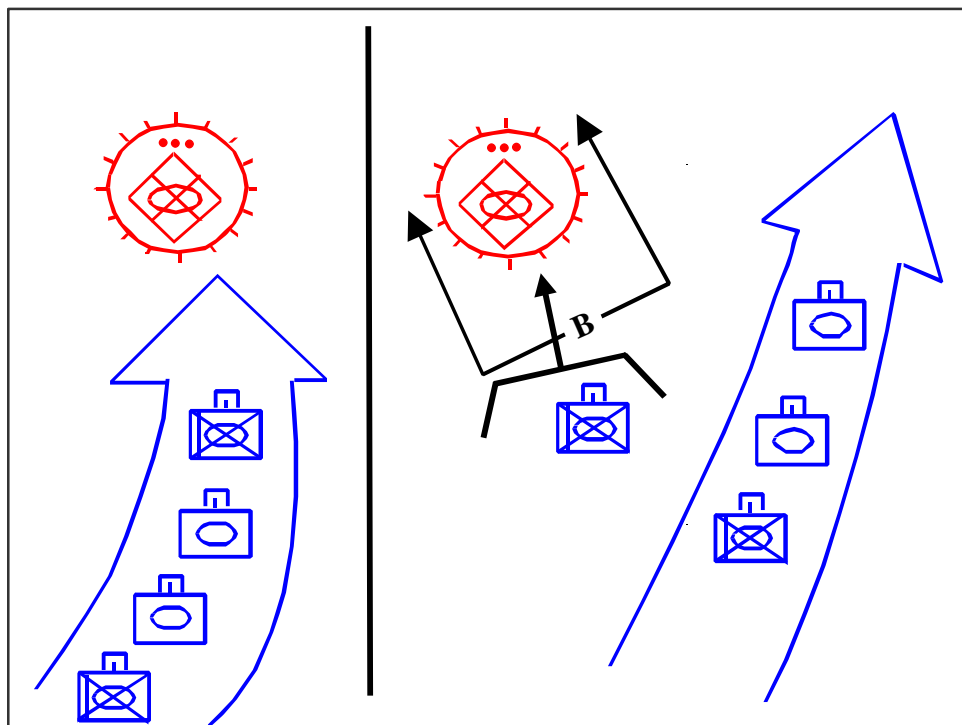
- The requirement to maintain momentum and aggressive action.
- The commander's knowledge of enemy strength, intent or mission.
- The degree to which the bypassed enemy can interfere with the advance.
- The general state of the enemy force; for example, if enemy resistance is crumbling, the friendly force can take greater risks.
- Any bypass criteria established by a higher headquarters.

**B-13.** The force conducting the bypass immediately reports any bypassed obstacles and enemy forces to its higher headquarters. The force keeps the bypassed enemy under observation until relieved by another force. Authority to bypass is not normally delegated below battalion task force level. Bypass criteria are established to limit the size of the enemy force that can be bypassed without the authority of the next higher commander. Before starting the bypass, the commander ensures that the bypass route is checked for enemy presence and trafficability. At no time can the bypassed enemy force be allowed to interfere with the moving friendly force.

**B-14.** The two bypass techniques that the force can employ are:

- Avoid the enemy totally.
- Fix the enemy in place with fires and then conduct the bypass.

**B-15.** If the force cannot avoid the enemy, the bypassing force must fix the enemy with part of its maneuver elements and bypass with the balance of the force. (See Figure B-7.) Generally a commander will not attempt to bypass an enemy force if more than a third of his combat power is required to fix the enemy. The commander assigns one subordinate unit the mission of fixing the enemy in this situation: reinforcing the fixing force as required by the factors of METT-TC. The commander of the fixing force coordinates with the unit assigned to relieve him as soon as possible and provides the new commander with all available information about the enemy and terrain. The relieving unit is normally another unit assigned a follow and support task. Once relieved, the force fixing the enemy either rejoins its parent organization or becomes part of the following element and comes under its control.



**Figure B-7. Example of a Task Force Conducting a Fix and a Bypass**

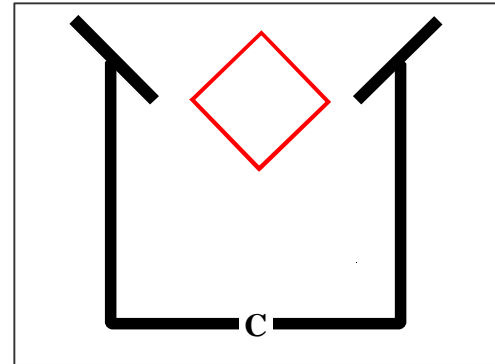
**B-16.** Occasionally the fixing force may be directed to break contact with the enemy after the bypassing force has completed the bypass. This occurs when the bypassing force has no requirement to maintain an uninterrupted logistics flow, such as in a raid. In this case, the fixing force fixes the enemy through employing defensive and limited

offensive actions in synchronization with all available fire support until ordered to rejoin the bypassing force.

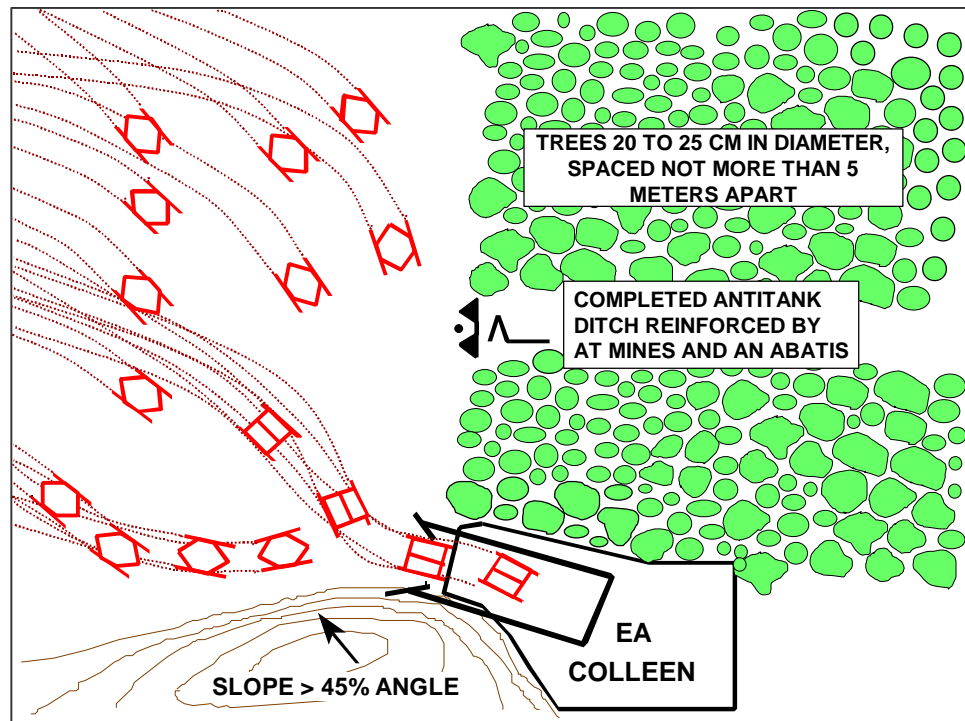
**CANALIZE** (Effect on enemy)

**B-17. Canalize is a tactical task in which the commander restricts enemy movement to a narrow zone by exploiting terrain coupled with the use of obstacles, fires, or friendly maneuver.** (See Figure B-8.)

Successful canalization results in moving the enemy formation or individual soldiers and weapon systems into a predetermined position where they are vulnerable to piecemeal destruction by direct and indirect fires as shown in Figure B-9.



**Figure B-8. Canalize Tactical Mission Graphic**



**Figure B-9. Example of Canalizing Terrain Enhanced by Obstacles Used with an Engagement Area**

**CLEAR** (Action by friendly force)

**B-18. Clear is a tactical task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance within an assigned area.** The force accomplishes this by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of enemy forces so they cannot interfere with the friendly unit's ability to accomplish its mission. In all cases, this task requires a thorough

reconnaissance to discover the enemy's locations. Once this is known, the clearing force maneuvers against the enemy force. Figure B-10 shows the tactical mission graphic for clear. The bar connecting the arrows designates the limit of advance for the clearing force.

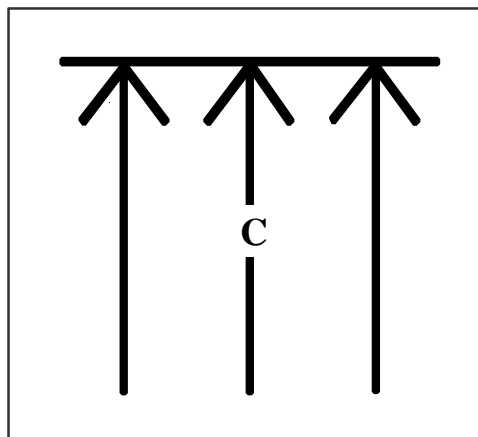
Figure B-10 shows the tactical mission graphic for clear. The bar connecting the arrows designates the limit of advance for the clearing force.

**B-19.** This task requires significant time and other resources. In his mission statement, a commander can modify the objective associated with this task to destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of only enemy forces larger than a stated size. In this case, enemy forces smaller than that specified are kept under observation while the rest of the friendly force bypasses them.

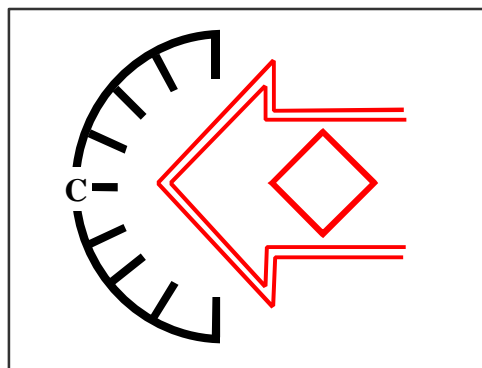
**CONTAIN** (Effect on the enemy)

**B-20. Contain is a tactical task that requires the commander to stop, hold, or surround enemy forces or to cause them to center their activity on a given front and prevent them from withdrawing any part of their forces for use elsewhere.** The limits of the

containment may be expressed in terms of geography or time. Containment allows an enemy to reposition himself within the designated geographic area, whereas fixing an enemy does not. Figure B-11 shows the tactical control graphic for contain.



**Figure B-10. Clear Tactical Mission Graphic**



**Figure B-11. Contain Tactical Mission Graphic**



**CONTROL** (Action by friendly force)

**B-21. Control is a tactical task that requires the commander to maintain physical influence over a specified area to prevent its use by an enemy.**

That influence can result from the friendly force's occupation of the specified area or the domination of that area by the friendly force's weapon systems. Control of an area does not require the complete clearance of all enemy soldiers from the specified area. The tactical task of control differs from that of secure because secure does not allow enemy fires to impact on the secured area. The enemy can engage targets within the controlled area but can not move his ground forces through that area.

**B-22.** Control is also a command relationship. Field Manuals 100-34, *Command and Control*, and 100-103, *Army Airspace Command and Control*, contains additional definitions of control.

**COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE** (Action by friendly force)

**B-23. Counterreconnaissance is a tactical task that encompasses all measures taken by a commander to counter enemy reconnaissance and surveillance efforts. Counterreconnaissance is not a distinct mission, but a component of security operations.** It prevents hostile observation of a force or area. Counterreconnaissance is an element of all security operations and most local security measures. It involves both active and passive elements and includes combat action to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance units and surveillance assets.

**B-24.** Destroying enemy ground reconnaissance assets while denying the enemy information through other collection systems allows friendly force commanders to operate against an enemy who is operating blindly. The enemy commander's inability to see the battlefield eventually desynchronizes his actions and renders his command vulnerable to aggressive action by friendly forces. (See Chapter 13 for additional information on counterreconnaissance.)

**DEFEAT** (Effect on the Enemy)

**B-25. Defeat is a tactical task that occurs when an enemy force has temporarily or permanently lost the physical means or the will to fight. The defeated force's commander is unwilling or unable to pursue his adopted course of action, thereby yielding to the friendly commander's will and can no longer interfere to a significant degree with the actions of**

**friendly forces. Defeat can result from the use of force or the threat of its use.**

**B-26.** A commander can generate different effects against an enemy to defeat him:

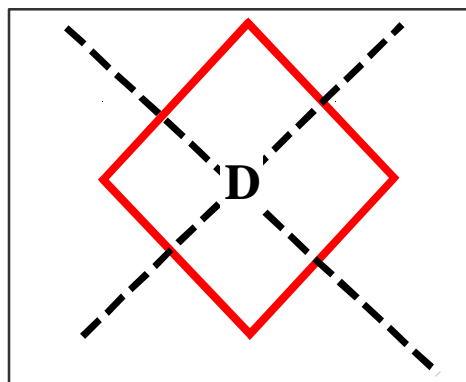
- **Physical.** The enemy loses the physical means to continue fighting. He no longer has the resources in terms of personnel, weapon systems, equipment, or supplies to carry out his assigned mission.
- **Psychological.** The enemy loses the will to fight. He becomes mentally exhausted, and his morale is so low that he can no longer continue to carry out his assigned mission.

These effects occur as a result of catastrophic losses inflicted over a very short time or result from sustained attrition. Defeat manifests itself in some sort of physical action, such as mass surrenders, abandonment of significant quantities of equipment and supplies, or retrograde operations.

#### **DESTROY** (Effect on the Enemy)

**B-27. To destroy is to physically render an enemy force combat-ineffective until it is reconstituted. Alternatively, to destroy a combat system is to damage it so badly that it cannot perform any function or be restored to a usable condition without being entirely rebuilt.** The amount of damage needed to render a unit combat-ineffective

depends on the unit's type, discipline, and morale. Destroying armored or dug-in targets with area fire weapons requires a large amount of ammunition and considerable time, so forces do not normally attempt it unless they have terminally guided munitions. Figure B-12 shows the tactical mission graphic for destroy.



**Figure B-12. Destroy Tactical Mission Graphic**

#### **DISENGAGEMENT** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-28. Disengagement is a tactical task where a commander has his unit break contact with the enemy to allow the conduct of another mission or to avoid decisive engagement.** It involves moving to a location where the enemy can neither engage the friendly force with direct fires or observed indirect fires. Disengaging from the enemy while displacing from one position to the next is a difficult procedure. A disengagement plan includes:

- The maneuver concept of operations for tactical elements after disengagement, which includes the movement routes for each subordinate unit.
- Fires to suppress the enemy and cover the unit's movement.
- Screening smoke to conceal the unit's movement, conduct a deception operation, or cover passage points.
- Contact and passage points if moving through friendly lines. (See Chapter 16.)
- The time disengagement starts.
- The earliest time that CS and CSS elements move.

**B-29.** The senior headquarters conducts operations to support the disengaging forces and relieve pressure on units in contact with the enemy. For example, if a division is conducting a delay, the division commander uses his aviation assets to help a ground maneuver brigade disengage from the close fight. Simultaneously, the division uses its long-range artillery, rocket, and EW systems to destroy or disrupt enemy follow-on echelons to prevent them from interfering with the disengagement. The intent is to create conditions that allow the unit to disengage while avoiding decisive combat.

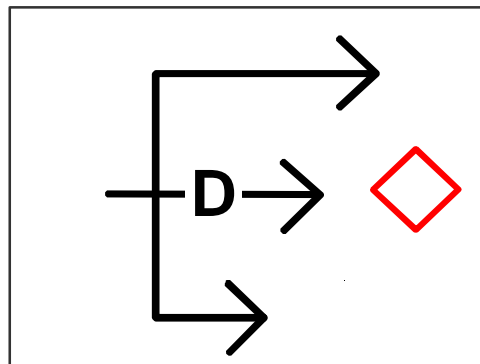
**B-30.** To facilitate disengagement, the commander suppresses the enemy by bombarding him with large volumes of both direct and indirect fires provided by forces other than the disengaging unit. In open terrain, the unit generally moves its short-range systems first. In close terrain, it generally moves its long-range systems first to overwatching positions. The time involved to move a system to its next position also affects when that system moves. Small-unit leaders usually direct this movement because of the limited range of combat net radios and the fact that the tactical situation varies across a unit's front. The process repeats as necessary. Once disengagement starts, units must complete it rapidly. The commander can employ supporting units or reserves to protect the disengaging unit's flanks and assist in freeing any closely engaged elements. The unit then moves to its next position using the appropriate movement technique. (See Chapter 14.)

**B-31.** If enemy combat systems have not closed within direct fire range of the friendly disengaging unit, all its elements may be able to move simultaneously under the cover of intense fires and smoke. Speed of execution and continued coordination are essential to the success of this task.

## **DISRUPT** (Effect on the Enemy)

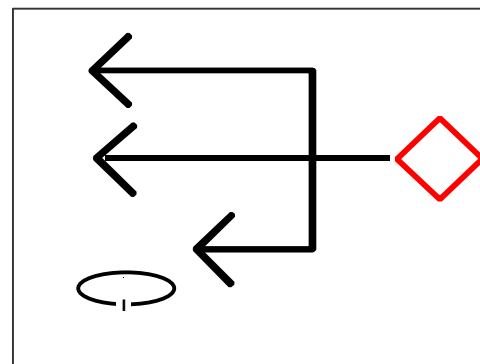
**B-32. Disrupt is a tactical task in which a commander integrates direct and indirect fires, terrain, and obstacles to upset an enemy's formation or tempo, interrupt his timetable, or cause his forces to commit prematurely or attack in a piecemeal fashion.** This increases the enemy's vulnerability to friendly fires. It may temporarily knock a unit out of the battle. Disruption is never an end, it is the means to an end. Figure B-13 shows the tactical mission graphic for disrupt.

**B-33.** The maneuver force attempting to disrupt an enemy must attack him with enough combat power to achieve desired results with one mass attack or sustain the attack until it achieves the desired results. It may involve attacking the enemy while he is still in his assembly areas or in an approach march before he can deploy into a combat formation. The commander determines the amount of risk he is willing to accept based on friendly losses, the location of the attack, and the number of attacks.



**Figure B-13. Disrupt Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-34. Disrupt is also an engineer obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to cause the enemy to break up its formation and tempo, interrupt its timetable, commit breaching assets prematurely, and cause the enemy to attack in a piecemeal effort.**



**Figure B-14. Disrupt Obstacle Effect Graphic**

It also helps to deceive the enemy concerning the location of friendly defensive positions, to separate combat echelons, or to separate combat forces from their logistical support. As shown in Figure B-14, the short arrow in the obstacle-effect graphic indicates where obstacles impact the enemy's ability to maneuver. The longer arrows indicate where the commander will allow the enemy to bypass the obstacle effect so he can be attacked by fires. A defending commander normally uses the disrupt obstacle effect forward of his engagement areas. Obstacles by themselves cannot disrupt an enemy unit. Field Manual 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, describes the disrupt engineer obstacle effect.

## **EXFILTRATE** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-35. Exfiltrate is a tactical task where a commander removes personnel or units from areas under enemy control by stealth, deception, surprise, or clandestine means.** Friendly forces exfiltrate when they have been encircled by enemy forces and cannot conduct a breakout or be relieved by other friendly forces.

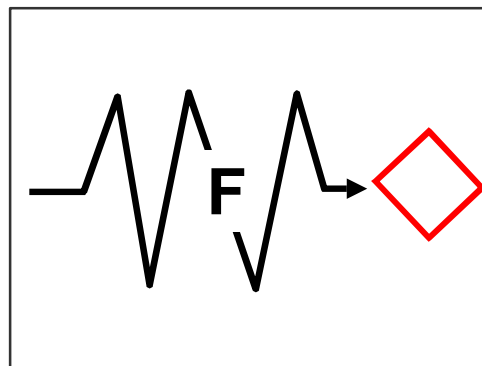
Forces returning from a raid, an infiltration, or a patrol behind enemy lines can also conduct an exfiltration. The commander exfiltrates an encircled force to preserve a portion of the force; it is preferable to the capture of the entire force. A force exfiltrates only after destroying or incapacitating all equipment (less medical) not accompanying the force. A force conducting an exfiltration leaves its casualties in place with supplies, chaplain support, and medical attendants only as a last resort.

**B-36.** Exfiltration is most feasible over rough or difficult terrain through areas lightly covered by enemy observation and fire. These conditions often allow undetected movement of small elements when movement of the entire force would present more risk. Exfiltration requires resourcefulness, a high degree of discipline, expert land navigational skills, and motivation. It is unlikely that the entire force will be able to exfiltrate, since part of it may have to create a diversion. Good, small-unit leadership is essential in this type of operation.

**B-37.** The exfiltrating force establishes its rally points and exfiltration lanes before starting the exfiltration. It coordinates its linkup plans with other friendly units. The exfiltration lanes are designated restricted fire areas (RFAs) or no fire areas (NFAs). The exfiltrating force uses preparatory fires to cover its movement and to expend stockpiled ammunition. Based on reconnaissance and available intelligence, the exfiltrating force subdivides into small groups and exfiltrates during periods of limited visibility by passing through and around enemy defensive positions. If detected, it tries to bypass the enemy. Exfiltration may be more difficult with combat and tactical vehicles because of the noise they make and the limitations they impose on exfiltration routes, which makes their detection more likely.

#### **FIX** (Effect on the Enemy)

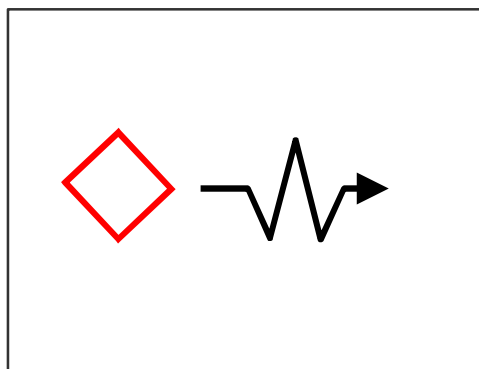
**B-38. Fix is a tactical task where a commander prevents the enemy from moving any part of his force from a specific location for a specific period of time.** This may occur by engaging him to prevent his withdrawal for use elsewhere, or by using deception, such as transmitting false orders. The commander uses fix in offensive and defensive actions; it is always a shaping operation. Figure B-15 shows the tactical mission graphic for fix.



**Figure B-15. Fix Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-39.** Fixing an enemy force does not mean destroying it. The friendly force has to prevent the enemy from moving or otherwise providing support to the objective of the friendly force's decisive operation(s). This task usually has a time element associated with it, such as fix the enemy reserve force until the decisive operation is successful. The tactical task of fix differs from that of block in that a fixed enemy force cannot move from a given location but a blocked enemy force can move in any direction other than the one obstructed.

**B-40. Fix is also an engineer obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area.** Primary use of this effect is to give the friendly unit time to acquire, target, and destroy the attacking enemy with direct and indirect fires throughout the depth of an engagement area or avenue of approach. The irregular part of the arrow in the obstacle-intent graphic indicates the location where the enemy's rate of advance will be slowed by the presence of complex obstacles. (See Figure B-16.) Field Manual 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, describes the fix engineer obstacle effect.



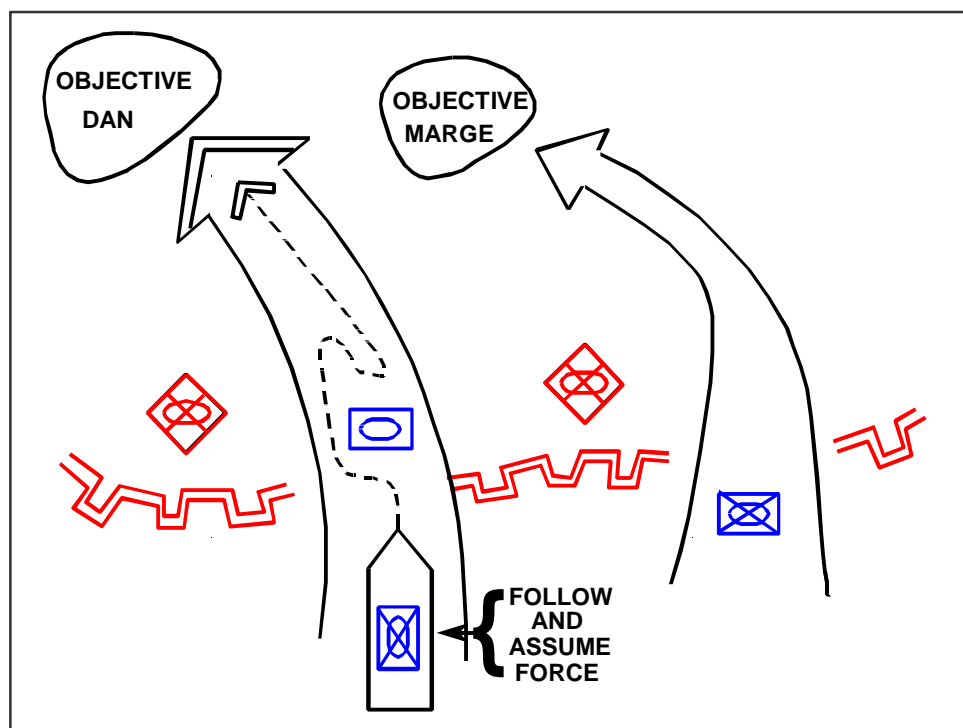
**Figure B-16. Fix Obstacle Intent Graphic**

## **FOLLOW AND ASSUME** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-41. Follow and assume is a tactical task in which a second committed force follows a force conducting an offensive operation and is prepared to continue the mission of the force being followed when that force is fixed, attrited, or unable to continue.** The follow and assume force is not a reserve but is committed to accomplish specific tasks. Figure B-17 shows the tactical mission graphic for follow and assume.

**B-42.** Tasks for a follow and assume force include:

- Preparing to execute all missions of the followed unit.
- Maintaining contact with the trail elements of the force it is following.
- Preparing to conduct a forward passage of lines through the force it is following.
- Monitoring all combat information and intelligence being provided to and from the force it is following.
- Avoiding engaging enemy forces bypassed by the force it is following.



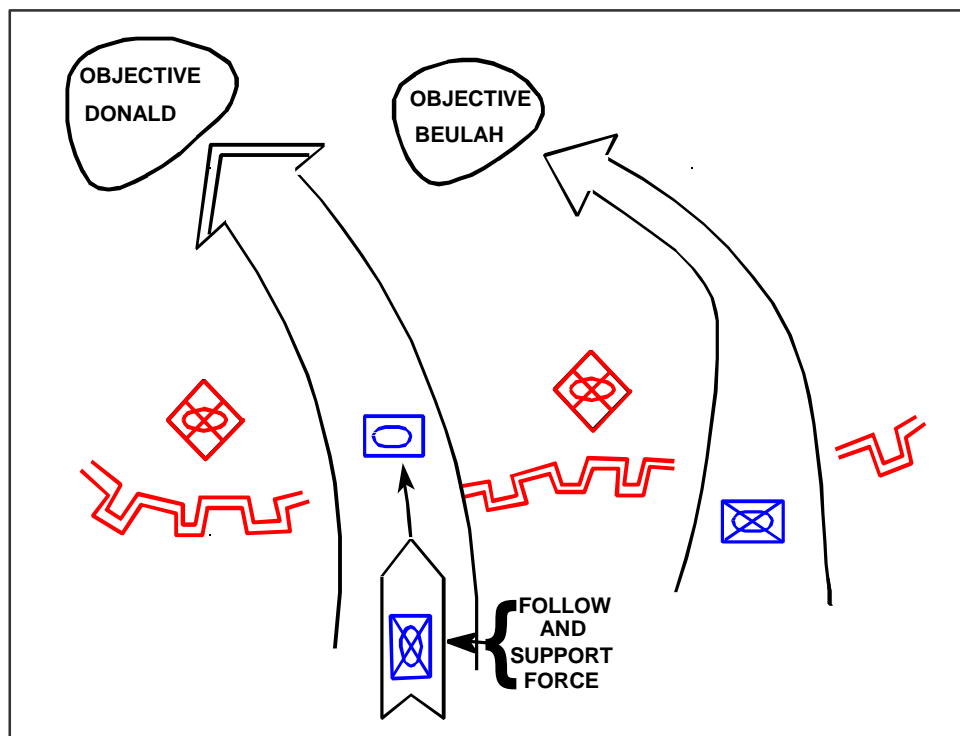
**Figure B-17. Follow and Assume Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-43.** A commander assigns a follow and assume mission to ensure that he can maintain the momentum of his offensive operation. The follow and assume force must accomplish its tasks to ensure that it can immediately execute a forward passage of lines and assume the mission of the lead force.

**B-44.** The commander assigning a unit the task of follow and assume has two options in establishing the relationship between the lead and trail unit. The commander normally retains command of both units and requires that all requests for support from the supported unit to the supporting unit go through his headquarters. Alternatively in situations where he will not be able to maintain control over both units, the commander places the supporting unit in a standard command relationship with the supported unit, such as attached or operational control. An example of when this occurs when both units are trying to encircle a retrograding enemy force and the commander remains with the direct pressure force.

#### **FOLLOW AND SUPPORT (Action by Friendly Force)**

**B-45. Follow and support is a tactical task in which a committed force follows and supports the mission accomplishment of a force conducting an offensive operation.** The follow and support force is not a reserve but is a force



**Figure B-18. Follow and Support Tactical Mission Graphic**

committed to specific tasks. Figure B-18 shows the tactical mission graphic for follow and support.

**B-46.** Tasks for a follow and support force include:

- Destroying bypassed enemy units, when the lead unit does not clear the AO as it advances.
- Relieving in place any direct pressure or encircling force halted to contain the enemy.
- Blocking movement of enemy reinforcements.
- Securing lines of communication.
- Clearing obstacles.
- Guarding prisoners, key areas, and installations.
- Recovering friendly battle losses.
- Securing key terrain.
- Controlling refugees.

**B-47.** A commander assigns a unit the task of follow and support to avoid the force being supported from having to commit its combat power to tasks other than the decisive operation, which would slow the momentum of the offensive. The follow and support force must accomplish its tasks to prevent the enemy, obstacles, and other factors from interfering with offensive operations, especially along the lines of communications.

**B-48.** The commander assigning the follow and support task has two options in establishing the relationship between the supported and the supporting units. He can



place the follow and support unit in a standard command relationship with the supported unit, such as attached or operational control. Alternatively, he can retain command of the follow and support force and require that all tasking from the supported unit go through his headquarters for transmittal to the follow and support unit.

## **INTERDICT** (Effect on the Enemy)

**B-49. Interdict is a tactical task where the commander prevents, disrupts, or delays the enemy's use of an area or route.**

Interdiction is a shaping operation conducted to complement and reinforce other ongoing offensive or defensive operations. Figure B-19 shows the tactical mission graphic for interdict. The two arrows should cross on the unit or location targeted for interdiction.

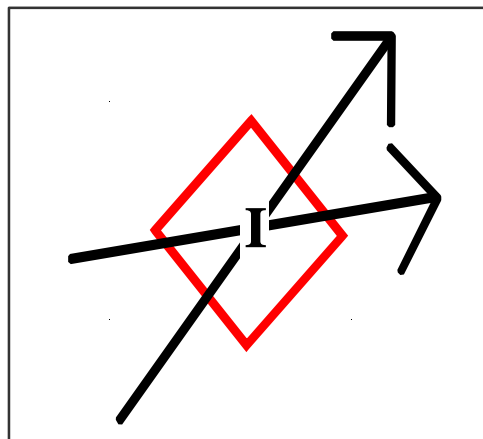
An interdiction tasking must specify how

long to interdict, defined as a length of time or some event that must occur before the interdiction is lifted, or the exact effect desired from the interdiction.

**B-50.** The depth at which the attacking force conducts the interdiction generally determines the friendly force's freedom of action. Increasing the depth of operations reduces the danger of fratricide to friendly air and surface forces, reduces the coordination required, and allows increasingly flexible operations. With more freedom of action, aerial forces leave the enemy with no location immune from attack.

**B-51.** The depth at which the task is conducted also determines the speed with which its effects are observed. Normally, ground maneuver units first focus on targets close to the forward line own troops (FLOT). Interdiction efforts there have immediate impact on enemy forces in the vicinity of the interdiction target but do not affect the enemy's ability to mass force effects. Attacks at greater distances from the FLOT have a delayed impact on close combat but eventually effect the enemy's ability to mass effects.

**B-52.** The friendly force's capability to interdict may have a devastating impact on the enemy's plans and ability to respond to friendly actions. For example, interdiction efforts that result in the enemy's maneuver being delayed or disrupted enhances the friendly force's ability to achieve tactical advantages. Delaying or disrupting enemy resupply efforts limits the enemy's ability to sustain intense, high-tempo offensive or defensive operations and restricts the mobility of his forces.



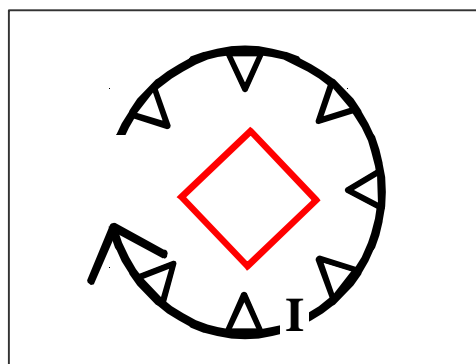
**Figure B-19. Interdict Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-53.** Interdicting the movement of enemy units can be extremely effective in assisting their encirclement and eventual destruction. Fixed enemy ground forces or those trapped by the loss of their mobility provide lucrative targets. The commander should plan to interdict withdrawing enemy forces to enhance his pursuit. While interdiction can contribute to success by hampering reinforcement and resupply, it also contributes by trapping enemy forces or canalizing their maneuvers, thus leading to their destruction in detail.

### **ISOLATE** (Effect on the Enemy)

**B-54. Isolate is a tactical task that requires a unit to seal off — both physically and psychologically — an enemy from his sources of support, deny an enemy freedom of movement, and prevent an enemy unit from having contact with other enemy forces.** A

commander does not allow an isolated enemy sanctuary within his present position but continues to conduct offensive actions against him. Figure B-20 shows the tactical mission graphic for isolate. The position or direction of the arrow has no significance.

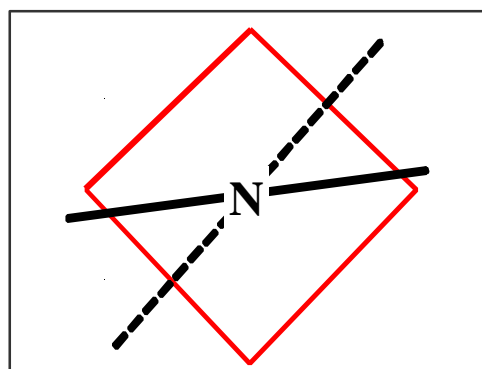


**Figure B-20. Isolate Tactical Mission Graphic**

### **NEUTRALIZE** (Effect on the Enemy)

**B-55. Neutralize is a tactical task that results in rendering enemy personnel or material incapable of interfering with a particular operation.** Figure B-21 shows the neutralize tactical mission graphic.

When assigning a task to neutralize, the commander must specify the enemy force or material to neutralize and the duration, which is time-driven or event-driven. The neutralized target may become effective again when casualties are replaced, damage is repaired, or effort resulting in the neutralization is lifted. The commander normally uses a combination of lethal and nonlethal fires to

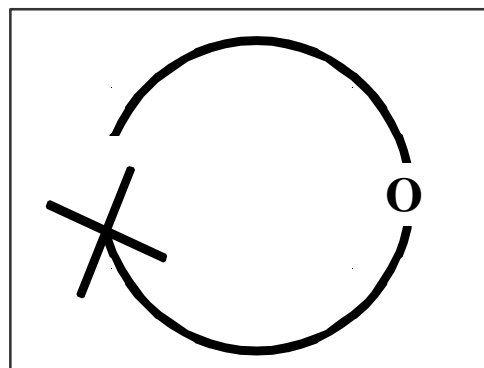


**Figure B-21. Neutralize Tactical Mission Graphic**

neutralize enemy personnel or material. The assets required to neutralize a target vary according to the type and size of the target and the weapon and munitions combination used.

### **OCCUPY** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-56. Occupy is to move into an area without opposition and to control that entire area.** A unit can control an area without occupying it, but not vice versa. That movement is the difference between the tactical tasks of occupy and control. Figure B-22 shows the occupy tactical mission graphic. The X on the tactical mission graphic has no significance. Chapter 5 discusses the occupation of assembly areas and objectives, and Chapter 8 discusses the occupation of defensive positions.



**Figure B-22. Occupy Tactical Mission Graphic**

### **OVERWATCH** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-57. Overwatch is a tactical task in which the commander positions one element (the overwatch element) to support by fire the movement of another element. The overwatch element observes known or suspected enemy locations and engages the enemy if he is visible or attempts to fire on the supported friendly element.** The overwatching element must know if it is to destroy, suppress, or fix the enemy.

**B-58.** Once the commander gives an element the task of overwatch, it should occupy positions that have cover and concealment, good observation, and clear fields of fire. Elements occupying overwatch positions should:

- Check the security of the position.
- Assume fighting positions that provide some degree of protection. Heavy forces occupy hull-down firing positions while light forces use trees, natural berms, buildings, and similar existing terrain features.
- Assign observation sectors to each soldier or weapon system in the overwatching element.
- Orient weapons on likely or suspected enemy positions.
- Search for targets.

**B-59.** The overwatching force uses its available thermal sights to locate heat sources not visible to the naked eye, such as vehicles concealed in tree lines or other wooded area or personnel serving at OPs.

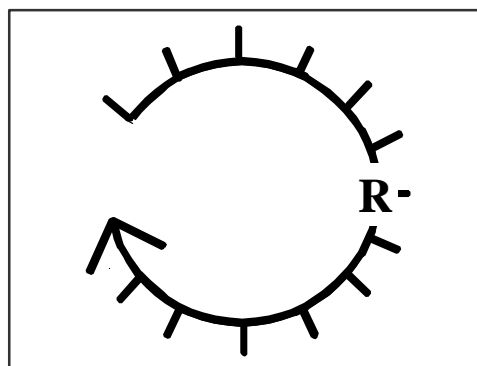
**REDUCE** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-60. Reduce is a tactical task that involves the destruction of an encircled or bypassed enemy force.** There is no tactical mission graphic for this task.

**B-61.** Reduce is also a mobility task that involves creating sufficient lanes through an obstacle to negate the intended effect of the obstacle.

**RETAIN** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-62. Retain is a tactical task in which the commander ensures that a terrain feature already controlled by a friendly force remains free of enemy occupation or use.** The commander assigning this task must specify the area to retain and the duration of the retention, which is time- or event-driven. While a unit is conducting this task, it expects the enemy

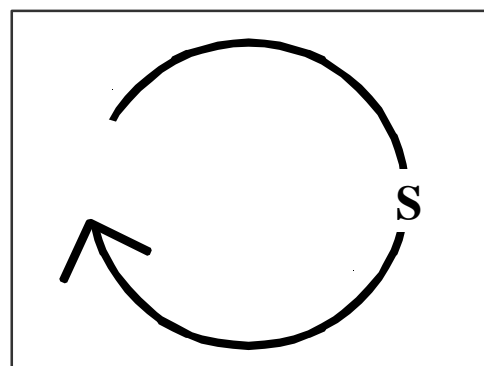


**Figure B-23. Retain Tactical Mission Graphic**

to attack and prepares to become decisively engaged. A unit told to retain a specific piece of terrain does not necessary have to occupy it. Figure B-23 shows the tactical mission graphic for retain. The direction of the arrow has no significance.

**SECURE** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-63. Secure is a tactical task that involves preventing a unit, facility, or geographical location from being damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action.** This task normally involves the conduct of area security activities. (See Chapter 13.) A force given the mission of securing a unit, facility, or geographical location not only prevents enemy forces from overrunning or occupying the secured location but



**Figure B-24. Secure Tactical Mission Graphic**

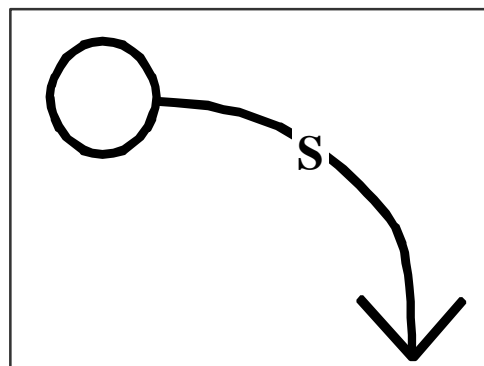
also prevents enemy direct and observed indirect fires from impacting the secured location. This is the primary difference between control and secure. The control tactical task allows enemy direct and indirect fires to affect the location being controlled. A unit does not have to physically occupy the area immediately around the unit, facility, or geographical location it is securing if it can prevent the enemy from occupying or firing at that location by other means. The commander states the mission duration in terms of time or event when assigning a mission to secure a given unit, facility, or geographical location. Figure B-24 shows the tactical mission graphic for secure. The direction of the arrow has no significance.

### **SEIZE** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-64. Seize is a tactical task that involves taking possession of a designated area through the use of overwhelming force.** Figure B-25

shows the tactical mission graphic for seize. The arrow points to the location or objective to seize. This task differs from secure because it requires offensive action to obtain control of the designated area or

objective. Once a force seizes a physical objective, it clears the terrain within that objective by killing, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of all enemy forces.



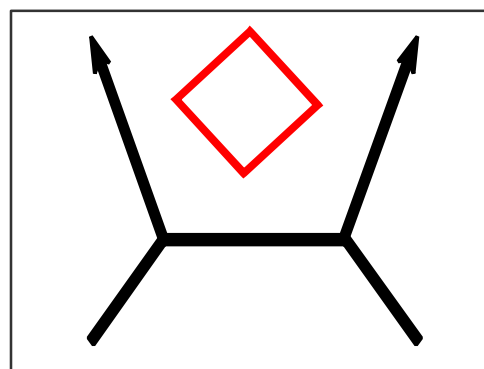
**Figure B-25. Seize Tactical Mission Graphic**

### **SUPPORT BY FIRE** (Action by Friendly Force)

**B-65. Support by fire is a tactical task in which a maneuver force moves to a position where it can engage the enemy by direct fire in support of another maneuvering force.** The primary objective of the

support force is to fix and suppress the enemy so he cannot effectively fire on the maneuvering force. The secondary objective is to destroy the enemy if he tries to reposition. A unit conducting the task of

support by fire does not maneuver to capture enemy forces or terrain. This task is given



**Figure B-26. Support by Fire Position Tactical Mission Graphic**

to another unit as part of a larger maneuver. When assigning a support by fire mission, the commander designates the enemy, when to attack, the general location from which to operate, the friendly force to support, and the purpose of the task, such as fix or suppress. Figure B-26 shows the tactical mission graphic for support by fire. The ends of the arrow should go on either side of the targeted unit or location.

**B-66.** Support by fire closely resembles the task of attack by fire. The difference is that support by fire supports another force so it can maneuver against the enemy while an attack by fire does not support the maneuver of another friendly force.

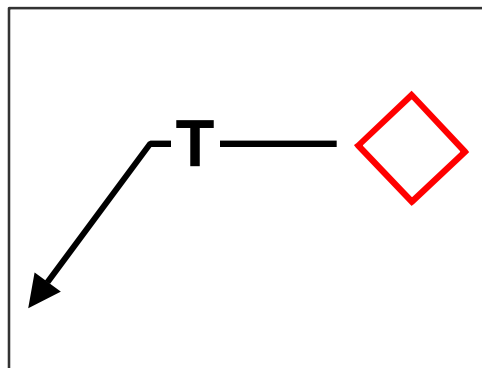
### **SUPPRESS** (Effect on Enemy)

**B-67.** Suppression is a tactical task that results in the temporary degradation of the performance of a force or weapon system below the level needed to accomplish its mission. It occurs when a commander employs direct or indirect lethal fires, offensive information operations, or smoke on enemy personnel, weapons, and equipment to prevent or degrade enemy fires, sensors, and visual observation of friendly forces. As opposed to the neutralization task, the original target regains its effectiveness without the need to reconstitute once the effects of the systems involved in the suppression effort are lifted or shifted to another target.

### **TURN** (Effect on Enemy)

**B-68.** Turn is a tactical task that involves forcing an enemy force from one avenue of approach or movement corridor to another. The commander relates obstacles, fires, and terrain so as to improve his tactical situation while degrading the enemy's. For example, in the offense a commander might want to turn an enemy he is pursuing to allow him to place the enemy

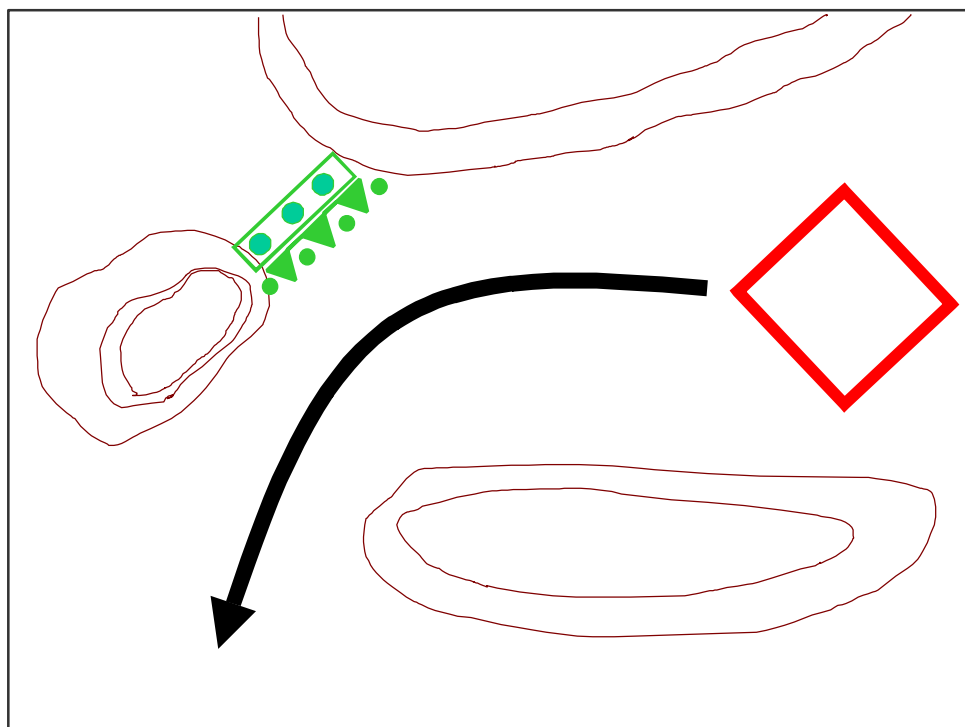
in a position where he can complete its destruction. In the defense, a commander might want to turn an attacking enemy so as to allow the commander to conduct a counterattack into the flank of the advancing enemy. Figure B-27 shows the turn tactical mission graphic.



**Figure B-27. Turn Tactical Mission Graphic**

**B-69. Turn** is also a tactical obstacle effect that integrates fire planning and obstacle effort to divert an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to an adjacent avenue of approach or into an engagement area.

Its development requires well-defined mobility corridors and avenues of approach. To achieve this effect, the obstacles have a subtle orientation relative to the enemy's approach as shown in Figure B-27. The obstacles and their associated fires allow bypasses in the direction desired by the friendly scheme of maneuver. Finally, the obstacles tie into restrictive terrain at the initial point of the turn. A commander normally uses the turn effect on the flanks of an engagement area. The direction of the arrow indicates the desired direction of turn. See FM 90-7, *Combined Arms Obstacle Integration*, for more information on tactical obstacle effects.



**Figure B-28. Turn Obstacle Effect**

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*"A landing against organized and highly trained opposition is probably the most difficult undertaking which military forces are called upon to face."*

General of the Army George C. Marshall, 1943

## APPENDIX C

# AIRBORNE AND AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS

**Airborne and air assault operations are types of entry operations that use a vertical envelopment to insert a force into an area of operations.** An enemy may or may not be in a position to oppose the operation. While the commander should attempt to achieve an unopposed landing, he must prepare for the presence of opposition.

**C-2.** The capability to conduct airborne and air assault operations allows the commander to:

- Threaten enemy sustainment areas, causing the enemy to divert combat elements to protect vital installations and hold key terrain.
- Overcome distances quickly, overfly barriers, and bypass enemy defenses.
- Extend the area over which he can exert his influence.
- Disperse his reserve forces widely for force protection reasons while maintaining their capability for effective and rapid response.
- Exploit his combat power by increasing tactical mobility.

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### FACTORS COMMON TO BOTH OPERATIONS

**C-3.** Factors common to airborne and air assault operations are the use of the reverse planning process and the impact of meteorological conditions (weather and light data).

### USE OF THE REVERSE PLANNING PROCESS

**C-4.** An inverse sequence of detailed planning and joint coordination characterizes both operations. As a minimum, airborne and air assault plans include:

- Ground tactical plan.
- Landing plan.
- Movement plan.
- Marshaling plan. (The air assault terminology for this last plan is the staging plan.)

Intelligence regarding the enemy and terrain characteristics of the objective area is vital to the planning process.

**C-5.** The ground tactical plan is the first plan completed. The ground tactical plan must address the early destruction of any enemy forces that pose an immediate threat to the lodgment area. From the ground tactical plan, commanders and their staffs normally develop the landing plan. From the landing plan, they develop the movement plan. This continues until the staff completes the marshaling plan. Both airborne and air assault operations must result in establishing positions that supports the completion of the total force's assigned mission.

**C-6.** The ground tactical plan is the base plan; however, each plan affects the others and can require adjustments in the other plans. The commander must determine if such adjustments entail acceptable risk. If the risk is unacceptable, the concept of operations must change. In future planning cycles, the ground tactical plan remains the basis for planning. For example, the amount of lift available determines the feasibility of the ground tactical plan. If there are not enough lift systems to put all the required forces in place at the required time, the commander should adjust the ground tactical plan as well as the other plans. Therefore, planning for airborne and air assault operations requires the staff to obtain vital planning data, such as the availability of lift systems and the technical and tactical capabilities of those systems, as early as possible.

**C-7.** From an operation's beginning until its completion or abandonment, commanders ensure continuous coordination between the parallel echelons of the assaulting combat force and the unit or service providing the transportation. Units jointly coordinate and staff each detail before initiating operations. The commander makes maximum use of combined arms capabilities to ensure the assault force has sufficient power to accomplish its mission and protect itself. Short planning times often require staffs to modify existing contingency plans and standard operating procedures to meet the exact situation while still ensuring adequate coordination.

## **METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS**

**C-8.** Meteorological conditions affect airborne and air assault operations more than they affect any other type of operation. Long-range forecasts are vital to planning. As part of the planning process, commanders determine what weather conditions would so adversely affect operations that they would require postponement or cancellation.

**C-9.** Commanders consider current and forecasted weather conditions in terms of their impact on tactical operations and aircraft performance. To issue the execution order that initiates the operation, the commander must know the current weather information at departure sites and pickup zones (PZs), along approach routes, and in the objective areas. Operations conducted during marginal weather conditions may enhance the

element of surprise, but they also increase the force's risk of accident. When the risk becomes unacceptable because of deteriorating weather conditions, the commander may have to curtail an ongoing operation.

**C-10.** Weather conditions affect aircraft performance and influence the conduct of operations. These conditions include: wind shears, crosswinds, and the ambient temperatures throughout the course of the operation. High temperature and altitude above sea level degrade aircraft lift performance. The combination of these factors results in trade-offs in the operating parameters of all missions. For example, a commander may insert dismounted reconnaissance teams on mountainsides in the cool of the morning, but be unable to execute the same mission in the noonday heat.

## AIRBORNE OPERATIONS

**C-11. *Airborne operations* are a joint operation involving primarily Army and Air Force units. An airborne operation involves the movement and delivery of combat forces and their combat support and combat service support elements by air into an objective area.** The objective area is known as the airhead. The airhead contains enough drop zones (DZs) and landing zones (LZs) to allow airborne forces to mass effects on their objectives. The airhead should also contain extraction zones (EZs), interior lines of communication, and terrain that allows for the conduct of a defense in depth. An administrative air movement of personnel, supplies, or equipment is not considered an airborne operation, although some procedures used in an airborne operation may apply. Joint Publication 3-18, *Joint Doctrine for Forcible Entry Operations*, and FM 90-26, *Airborne Operations*, establishes the doctrinal basis for airborne operations.

**C-12.** Airborne operations are joint operations because of the interservice linkages of modern command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) systems, the multiservice structure of the defense transportation system, and the broad range of forces and support involved. Airborne operations require secure staging and departure areas coupled with the need to maintain operational security (OPSEC). OPSEC measures may include establishing intermediate support bases within tactical airlift range. The operation begins and ends on the order of the commander who establishes the joint airborne force.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**C-13.** Once the commander determines the principal components of the ground tactical plan and the maneuver and fire support schemes, the airborne force organizes to execute its assigned mission. The commander balances the immediate need for combat power

with the need to ensure force sustainability over time. To ensure unity of effort, part or all of the assigned forces' subordinate units can form into one or more temporary tactical groupings, such as teams or task forces. Each tactical group has a designated commander. Doctrine cannot prescribe in advance a standard organization to meet all conditions. However, airborne forces generally divide into one of three echelons: the assault echelon, the follow-on echelon, and the rear echelon.

**C-14. The *assault echelon* normally comprises those forces capable of insertion by parachute in a single drop by the available transportation lift systems.** The assault echelon is a combined arms organization with only limited sustainment capabilities. The commander cross-loads vital assets, such as commanders, principal staff, communication systems, reconnaissance and security forces, and crew-served weapons among the various transportation systems so the loss of a single air frame will not compromise the operation. (Cross-loading also applies to air assault operations.)

**C-15. The *follow-on echelon* generally contains those additional forces required to expand the initial airhead, secure the lodgment area, and establish one or more air and sea ports of debarkation.** The composition of the follow-on echelon depends on the factors of METT-TC. It can consist of heavy and light combined arms formations, field and air defense artillery assets, and combat engineers as well as significant CS and CSS elements. Introducing this echelon can extend over several days and involve multiple sorties by individual lift systems. Usually, this echelon does not require cross loading of its allocated lift systems. This increases the carrying capacity of the lift systems delivering this echelon. This echelon contains increased sustainment capabilities.

**C-16. The *rear echelon* generally comprises those elements not required to conduct the actual entry and subsequent buildup of forces.** It may remain at home station or at an intermediate staging or support base throughout short-duration operations. This echelon generally contains the airborne unit's long-term sustainment capabilities.

## CONTROL MEASURES

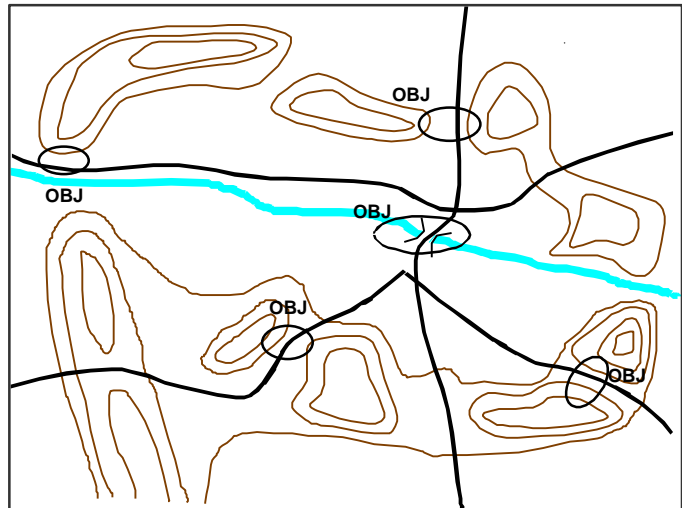
**C-17.** The commander has the full range of graphical control measures previously discussed in this manual to help control his operation. As a minimum, the commander must assign each subordinate unit an area of operations. The airborne operation commander also use DZs, LZs, EZs, assault objectives, and the airhead line to focus the efforts of his subordinates.

**C-18.** Selecting DZs and LZs is a joint responsibility. The mission commander is responsible for delivering personnel and cargo to the DZ or LZ and for selecting approaches to the landing area. Both the joint and component commanders must base their decisions on their knowledge of respective problems and on the needs of the overall operation. The nature and location of landing areas are important when preparing the scheme of maneuver. The mission governs the general area where they should be established. At higher echelons, commanders can assign landing areas in broad terms. At lower echelons, commanders must describe these locations specifically. The commander selects his drop zones only after conducting a detailed analysis. The commander uses the information provided by his intelligence system and Army pathfinders as he considers the following factors when selecting DZs and LZs:

- Ease of identification.
- Straight-line approach.
- Suitable for the weather and terrain.
- Out of range of enemy air defenses, strong ground defenses, and suppressive indirect fires.
- Close to or on top of an assault objective.

It is recognized that the last two entries conflict. The commander must decide which consideration has priority. Field Manual 100-27, *USA/USAF Doctrine for Joint Airborne and Tactical Airlift Operations*, provides more detailed information regarding the desired characteristics of DZs and LZs.

**C-19.** When assigning objectives and boundaries in airborne operations, the commander must consider other factors in addition to those inherent in conventional operations. The commander selects specific assault objectives based on an analysis of the situation.



**Figure C-1. Assault Objectives**

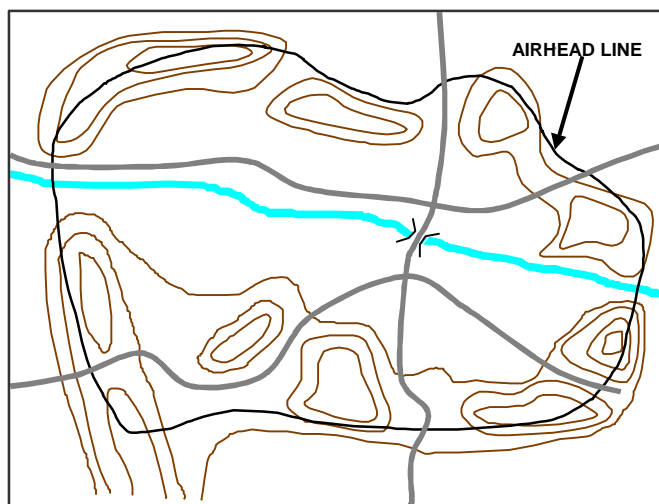
(See Figure C-1.) The assault objectives dictate the size and shape of the airhead although the commander develops the airhead line and determines the assault objectives

concurrently. The commander selects assault objectives for his subordinate elements. Concurrently, the commanders of these subordinate elements decide the size, type, or disposition of the force that they commit to gain and maintain control of their objectives.

**C-20.** Selecting assault objectives should allow forces to accomplish mission-essential tasks while meeting the commander's intent. However, they may not include those objectives that must be seized to secure the airhead line. An appropriate assault objective is one that the force must control early in the assault to accomplish the mission or enhance the security of the airborne force. This can include key terrain within the airhead or terrain required for linkup. The airborne force is vulnerable from the time it lands until follow-on forces arrive at the airhead. A mounted enemy unit that attacks the airhead immediately following the airborne assault can completely disrupt the operation or even cause it to fail. Therefore, the assault objectives selected by the commander are terrain locations that dominate high-speed enemy avenues of approach into the airhead. He can also select enemy positions that threaten the mission and are within the airhead. The unit must seize its assault objectives immediately to establish the airhead and provide security for follow-on forces.

**C-21.** The commander ranks the assault objectives based on the most likely threat or mission requirements. The airborne force secures its assault objectives before it establishes a perimeter defensive line along the trace of the airhead. It clears the terrain within the airhead of organized enemy resistance, and position forces to secure the airhead line.

**C-22.** At the same time as the commander selects assault objectives, he considers the extent of the airhead. The airhead line can be drawn in a dashed form to delineate the specific area to be seized and designate the airhead. An airhead line resembles a FEBA in that security and other

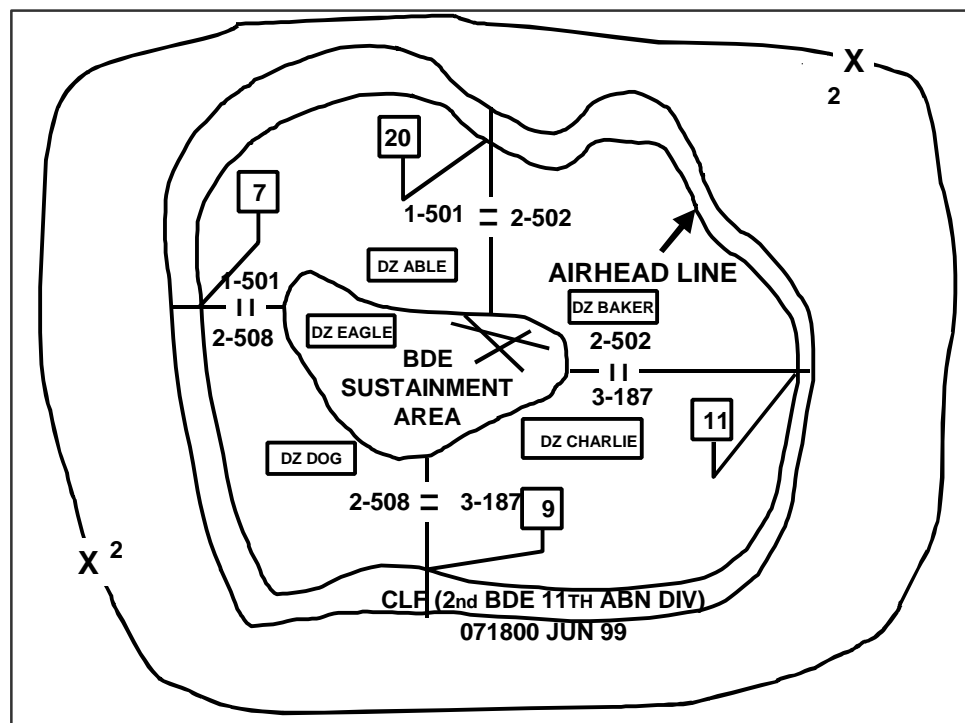


**Figure C-2. Airhead line**

forces operate outside of the airhead line. The airhead acts as a base for further

operations and as the lodgment to allow the airborne force to build up combat power. Once the assault force secures the airhead, it clears all enemy forces within it, not just organized enemy units. The following factors determine the location, extent, and form of the airhead line:

- The actual trace of the airhead line reflects the control of key or critical terrain essential to the mission. (See Figure C-2.) The airhead line should place the arrival airfield and any LZs or DZs out of the range of enemy direct fires and observed indirect fires.
- The airhead line is anchored on obstacles, and the airhead itself takes advantage of existing natural and man-made obstacles.
- The airhead contains enough DZs, LZs, and EZs to ensure the force has interior lines of communication and to permit one massed parachute assault by the entire assault echelon rather than piecemeal insertion.
- The airhead allows enough space for the dispersion of units and supplies to reduce the airhead's vulnerability to NBC weapons if they are a threat.
- The airhead must be large enough to provide for defense in depth, yet small enough for the airborne unit to defend. Although this depends largely on the factors of METT-TC, a battalion can defend an airhead 3 to 5 kilometers in diameter. A brigade can occupy an airhead 5 to 8 kilometers in diameter.



**Figure C-3. Example Boundaries and FSCM for an Airhead**

**C-23.** The commander considers several factors in addition to those considered in more routine operations when assigning boundaries and subordinate areas of operations (AOs) in airborne operations. Ideally, each unit's area of operation should include at least one

DZ and one LZ to enable the unit and its attachments to land within its assigned AO during the assault. Each unit's presence also facilitates resupply and evacuation of enemy prisoners of war and casualties. Establishing a LZ and a DZ reduces coordination requirements with adjacent units. The commander assigns boundaries that should not require a unit to defend in more than one direction at the same time. Boundaries should extend as far as necessary beyond forward security forces to coordinate fires. This enables subordinate security units to operate forward of the airhead with minimal coordination. See Figure C-3.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

**C-24.** The airborne force commander begins planning when he receives an initiating directive or a warning order. Joint Publication 3-18 describes the contents of an initiating directive or warning order as including the:

- Mission for subordinate units.
- Higher commander's concept of the operation.
- Command structure for the operation.
- Time and duration of the operation.
- Intelligence and security requirements.
- Allocation and distribution of airlift assets.
- Unit deployment list and sequence.
- Departure airfields, remote marshaling bases, and intermediate staging bases.
- Signal requirements and instructions.
- Link-up and withdrawal concept.

**C-25.** In an airborne operation that envisions an early linkup with conventional ground maneuver forces, the airborne unit defends the airhead until completing the linkup. Upon linkup with other ground maneuver forces, the airborne force either resumes the offensive within the commander's concept of the operation or prepares for subsequent operations. Tactical airborne operations begin with an initial assault followed by independent operations. They then transition to the defense of the established airhead until enough forces can be delivered to the objective area to break out of the established lodgment or a linkup with ground forces occurs.

**C-26.** The flexibility of airborne forces gives the commander wide latitude to select approach routes and objective areas. Airborne forces bypass ground obstacles and enemy positions to strike objectives in otherwise inaccessible areas. The ability of airborne forces to move rapidly and to land on or near their objectives increases the element of surprise. It also facilitates the massing of relative combat power because airborne forces can attack the objective from any direction, which leads to the dissipation of the enemy's defenses. The presence of airborne forces also constitutes a



threat that affects the enemy's capability to mass. These forces compel him to disperse combat power to protect vital, sustainment installations and other key locations.

**C-27.** The primary prerequisites to conducting successful airborne operations are : moving forces to an objective area without incurring unacceptable losses and supplying these forces with the required combat power, CS, and CSS. Steps taken to attain these objectives include the following: obtain and maintain air superiority, suppress enemy air defense capabilities and ground fires, and provide adequate air defense in the marshaling area enroute to and in the objective area.

**C-28.** In an airborne operation, the commander's primary initial sources of long -range fire support are air support and rocket or missile fires that can range the airhead. Other sources of fires may include naval surface fires. The commander may insert airborne artillery cannon units and attack helicopters to provide close supporting fires during the initial assault. The commander may introduce additional cannon, MLRS, and helicopter assets into the airhead during subsequent phases of the operation.

**C-29.** The capacity and availability of aircraft limit the size and amount of equipment and supplies available for movement to the objective area. The commander can insert his heavy equipment into the objective area by heavy parachute airdrops, or an air landing. The limited number of vehicles in airborne units reduces the unit's ground mobility in open terrain when compared to that of armored and mechanized formations. However, airborne units may gain considerable mobility by using helicopters. Units also make concerted efforts to capture and exploit enemy supplies, equipment, weapons, vehicles, and petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL).

**C-30.** Because of the displacement range of forces and the need for air lines of communication (LOC), airborne operations magnify the problems normally inherent in sustaining a combat force. To adequately deal with these increased problems, commanders must emphasize planning for resupply, equipment maintenance, casualty evacuation, graves registration, and prisoner of war handling. Prepackaging company- and battalion-size resupply sets can ease these operations when support units must push supplies to the combat units.

**C-31.** Concurrent with tactical planning, commanders should consider the provision of all supplies and equipment required to accomplish the mission. The initial combat requirements dictate the quantities and types of supplies and equipment carried by assault forces in the operation. Commanders ensure that only supplies required to satisfy the immediate needs of the assault force initially deploy into the objective area. Excess supplies and equipment can constitute a burden on the assault force. Staffs

establish and maintain required levels of supply by phasing supplies into the objective area on an accompanying, follow-up (automatic and on-call), and routine basis. Ammunition, water, and POL products normally constitute the major tonnage items in airborne operations.

**C-32.** As part of the preparation for the airborne operation, personnel receive briefings on the plan of their unit, adjacent units, and higher echelons including contingencies. This helps units or personnel landing in unplanned areas to direct their efforts toward accomplishing the mission.

### **EXECUTION OF AIRBORNE OPERATIONS**

**C-33.** Airborne operations may precede, accompany, or follow other types of operations. An airborne unit conducts day and night operations; each has its advantages and disadvantages, such as ease of target acquisition and identification of drop zones. Initially, as part of the preparatory or preassault fires, available fire support destroys or suppresses those enemy systems and units that pose an immediate danger to the airborne assault. The use of precision munitions increases the probability of achieving the desired effect. At the same time, it reduces the number of friendly fire support systems required to achieve this effect.

**C-34.** Executing the ground tactical plan involves the initial seizure of DZs and LZs in and around an airfield, or the actual seizure of an airfield. The assault echelon lands as closely as possible to its objective by parachute and immediately assembles. Its initial assault emphasizes the coordinated action of small units to seize initial objectives before the advantage of surprise has worn off. This is the operation's critical phase, and aggressive small-unit actions characterize it. Small-unit leader initiative is a key factor in a unit's ability to accomplish the mission. As assault forces seize assault objectives, the airborne force directs its efforts toward consolidating the airhead.

**C-35.** Tactical surprise and detailed planning should enable units to seize their assault objectives and to establish the airhead before the enemy has time to react in force. This ensures the uninterrupted landing of air-transported troops, equipment, and supplies. The commander changes the missions of his units as necessary in response to the enemy's actions. The enemy can be expected to launch uncoordinated attacks quickly along major avenues of approach using his locally available forces. The degree of coordination and strength of these attacks increases progressively over time. The airborne force must develop correspondingly greater strength in its defensive positions. It must also address the major issue of preparing to defend against a mounted counterattack.

**C-36.** Units assigned to perform reconnaissance and security missions land in early serials so that they can establish roadblocks, locate enemy forces, and disrupt enemy communication facilities. Since ground reconnaissance by unit commanders is seldom possible before the airborne operation, it must begin as soon as the unit lands. The flow of information must be continuous. The airborne commander's information requirements do not vary greatly from those of other light-force commanders. However, his unit's method of arrival into the combat area makes immediate and thorough reconnaissance and transmission of combat information to higher headquarters necessary.

**C-37.** If the initial assault objectives are heavily defended, the bulk of the force has the task of seizing these objectives. When initial objectives are lightly defended, the bulk of the force can clear assigned AOs and prepare defensive positions in depth. The commander initiates extensive patrolling as soon as possible between adjacent defensive positions within the airhead line and between the airhead and the forward trace of his security area. Army scout helicopters are well-suited to support this patrolling effort. In most cases, the commander establishes contact with any special operations forces or friendly irregular forces in the area through a special operations command coordination element (SOCCE) that accompanies the assault force.

**C-38.** Sufficient communications personnel and equipment must move into the airhead in advance of (or simultaneously with) the assault command post to ensure the timely installation of vital communications. As soon as communications and the tactical situation permit, the commander establishes:

- Command fire control channels within the airborne forces.
- Communications with supporting air and naval forces.
- Communications with airlift forces concerned with buildup, air supply, and air evacuation.
- Communications with bases in friendly territory.
- Communications between widely separated airborne or ground forces with a common or coordinated mission, such as link-up forces.

**C-39.** The commander influences the action by shifting or reallocating available fire support means. He may also:

- Move forces.
- Modify missions.
- Change objectives and boundaries.
- Employ reserves.
- Move to a place from which he can best exercise personal influence, especially during the initial assault.

**C-40.** With initial objectives secured, subordinate units seize additional objectives to expedite the establishment of a coordinated defense or the conduct of future operations. The commander then organizes defensive positions, supplements combat net radio (CNR) communications as required, and establishes a reserve. These, as well as other measures, prepare the force to repel enemy counterattacks, minimize the effects of weapons of mass destruction, or resume the offensive.

**C-41.** The reserve prepares and occupies defensive positions pending its commitment. Once the commander commits his reserve, typical missions include: taking over the missions of units delivered to the wrong locations, dealing with unexpected opposition in seizing assault objectives, and securing the initial airhead.

**C-42.** After the force makes the initial assault landing and accomplishes its initial ground missions, the commander must organize his airhead line. The situation dictates how units occupy and organize the airhead line. The commander adjusts the disposition of his units and installations to fit the terrain and the situation. Units take reconnaissance and security measures, which usually include reinforcing the security area. The mission, enemy capabilities, and defensive characteristics of the terrain determine the degree to which the airhead line is actually occupied and organized for defense.

**C-43.** The introduction of follow-on echelon forces in the buildup of the airhead proceeds concurrently with the seizure and organization of the airhead line. The intent of the buildup is to provide a secure operating logistics base for forces working to move the airhead away from the original point of attack. As additional combat troops arrive, they reinforce the airhead defensive positions, secure additional requisite terrain features and maneuver space as required by the mission, constitute reserves, and prepare for offensive operations. Follow-on ground operations exploit the advantages provided by the airhead. These follow the normal pattern of ground operations. After firm establishment of the airhead or lodgment area, or after executing a linkup with ground forces, airborne units are usually relieved to allow them to prepare for subsequent airborne assaults. If they cannot be relieved immediately, the higher commander provides them with additional combat power and sustainment capabilities.

## **AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS**

**C-44.** Air assault operations are often high-risk, high-payoff operations. An air assault task force (AATF) can dramatically extend the commander's ability to influence operations within his AO and to execute operations in locations ranging beyond the

capability of more conventional forces. The air assault force retains the flexibility to rapidly redeploy to conduct subsequent offensive or defensive operations. Air assault operations closely resemble airborne operations. Air assault forces are most vulnerable during the takeoff from pickup zones (PZs) and the landing at landing zones (LZs) in unsecured areas.

**C-45.** In air assault operations, assault forces (which provide combat, combat support, and combat service support), using the firepower, mobility, and total integration of helicopter assets, maneuver on the battlefield under the control of the ground tactical commander. Their goal is to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. Joint doctrine regards air assault operations as a subset of airborne operations. Air assault operations are not merely administrative movements of soldiers, weapons, and material by Army aviation units; rather, they are deliberate, precisely planned, and vigorously executed combat operations designed to allow friendly forces to strike over extended distances and terrain barriers to attack the enemy when and where he is most vulnerable. They are planned using the previously described backward planning process. The primary references for air assault operations are FM 1-113, *Utility and Cargo Helicopter Operations*, and FM 90-4, *Air Assault Operations*.

**C-46.** The substantial mobility of an air assault force enables its commander to achieve surprise and deception and to conduct operations throughout his AO. However, air assault operations conducted in locations geographically remote from supporting forces may place the air assault force at increased risk if the reconnaissance and intelligence systems do not accurately detect enemy forces positioned to disrupt the air assault. Air assault units are well suited for use as reaction forces and in search and attack operations when information about the enemy's location, strength, and disposition is vague.

The large-scale use of helicopters in air assault operations greatly multiplies the mobility of ground units and contributes directly to an increase in combat effectiveness. Their use allows the ground commander to take advantage of the speed and flexibility of Army aircraft to accomplish a variety of tasks. For example, during a river crossing operation, an air assault can help secure the crossing site or bridgehead line.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**C-47.** Air assault operations employ AATFs. An AATF is a highly tailored, combined arms force specifically designed to hit fast and hard. It is under the command of a single headquarters. An AATF is used best in situations that provide a calculated advantage because of surprise, terrain, threat, or mobility. An AATF should consist of

infantry, attack helicopters, fire support, electronic warfare, and logistic assets. The ground or air maneuver commander who is designated the air assault task force commander (AATFC) commands the AATF.

**C-48.** The lowest-echelon headquarters capable of controlling and coordinating the entire air assault operation exercises control of the aircraft in accordance with the overall plan. As a minimum, this is normally a brigade headquarters. This headquarters must coordinate airspace with other users, including artillery, air defense, air support, and other Army aviation units. It must also coordinate the air assault force's plans for maneuver and combat service support with those of higher, subordinate, and adjacent units.

**C-49.** The airlift unit is either in direct support of the ground combat unit or under the operational control of the AATF. The AATF commander determines, with the air mission commander's input, when the operational control (OPCON) relationship begins and ends. The commander does not attach the airlift unit to the AATF because it is unlikely that a ground unit can control the aviation unit and supply the large amounts of ammunition and fuel required by aviation units. Direct support (DS) and OPCON command relationships place no logistics responsibility for the supporting unit on the supported unit. Consequently, DS or OPCON is usually the desired relationship between air and ground units in air assault operations.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**C-50.** The control measures that apply to an airborne operation also apply to an air assault operation. As a minimum, each subordinate unit must be assigned an AO. The AATF and aviation staffs select LZs that support the ground tactical plan and offer the best survivability for the AATF. As in airborne operations, the designation of LZs within the unit's AO simplifies the provision of additional support to the unit. The AATF commander also uses assault objectives and the airhead line to focus the efforts of his subordinates. As necessary, the commander uses those attack control measures introduced in Chapter 6 to help control the force's maneuver once it enters the area of operations.

**C-51.** In air assault operations, the commander makes extensive use of Army airspace command and control (A<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup>) measures to control the movement of the assault, attack, special electronic mission, and cargo aircraft. For example, Figure C-4 shows flight routes as depicted on an overlay. FM 100-103, *Army Airspace Command and Control in the Combat Zone*, details Army airspace command and control measures.

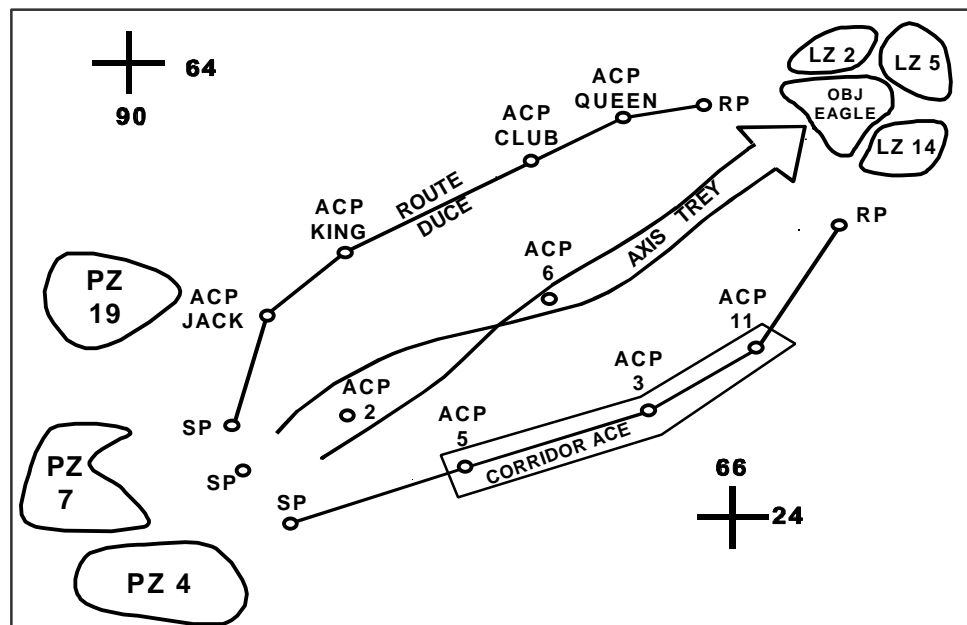


Figure C-4. Flight Routes Depicted on an Overlay

#### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

**C-52.** The integration of aviation and infantry does not fundamentally change the nature of combat operations. The air assault force continues to fight as a combined arms team. However, the tempo and distance involved in such operations do change dramatically. Missions normally assigned to an AATF should take advantage of its superior mobility. However, the commander should not employ an AATF in operations that require sustained ground combat without a detailed resupply plan. Once the air assault is complete the aviation unit can continue to support the infantry by conducting aerial movement of systems and critical supplies.

**C-53.** Basic air assault planning operational guidelines:

- Assign a mission that takes advantage of the AATF's mobility.
- Task-organize the AATF as a combined arms team.
- Allow extra time for planning and preparing for limited-visibility and adverse weather air assaults.
- Maintain small-unit integrity throughout the air assault to ensure the ability to fight as a cohesive unit immediately upon landing.
- Plan and posture fire support to provide suppressive fires along flight routes and on LZs, and to suppress enemy air defense systems.
- Ensure the air assault plan supports the AATF commander's intent for the air assault.

**C-54.** The foundation of a successful air assault operation is the commander's ground tactical plan. The AATF staff prepares this plan based on input from all task force

elements. All aircrews must be familiar with the ground tactical plan and the ground commander's intent.

**C-55.** The ground tactical plan for an air assault operation comprises essentially the same elements as any other infantry attack but differs in the requirements for speed and mobility. The plan places assault units on or near the objective and organized so they are capable of seizing objectives immediately and consolidating quickly. If the commander cannot introduce adequate combat power quickly into the objective area, the air assault force must land away from the objective and build up combat power. This force then assaults like any other infantry unit; however, this diminishes the effectiveness of the air assault operation. The scheme of maneuver may take many forms depending on the situation and the factors of METT-TC.

**C-56.** The ground tactical plan addresses:

- Assault objectives for subordinate elements.
- Designation of the LZs available for each subordinate element; the distance from each unit's LZ to the assault objective is considered before assigning them.
- D-day and H-hour (time of assault).
- Special tasks required to accomplish the mission.
- Task organization and command relationship of all organic and supporting units required to accomplish the mission.
- Fire support during the assault, such as close air support, field artillery, mortars, and jammers.
- Flight corridors.
- Air defense suppression.
- Subsequent operations, such as defense, linkup, and withdrawal, that may be conducted.
- Enemy locations, including air defense positions and type.
- CSS.

**C-57.** To achieve tactical surprise, the commander may decide to make the initial assault without preparatory fires. However, he always plans fires to support helicopter assault and combat operations on each LZ so that they are rapidly available if needed. These fires are normally short in duration with a high volume to maximize surprise and shock effect. All indirect fires should end just before the first assault element lands. The commander uses attack helicopters to suppress and destroy enemy systems during the interim period when indirect fires stop impacting and the initial assault element lands and prepares to conduct operations. Fire support planning provides for suppressive fires along flight routes and near landing zones to help ensure that the air assault unit lands as planned. Priority of fires is normally to the suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD) systems. The location of those systems is critical information needed by the commander.



**C-58.** A unit maintains its tactical integrity throughout the air assault. All members of a squad load onto the same aircraft (AC), and platoons are in the same serial. Both ensure unit integrity upon landing. The commander cross-loads key weapons, ammunition, and command groups to ensure that the loss of one AC does not result in the loss of a given weapon system or the disruption of command.

**C-59.** The AATF commander uses aviation resources to the maximum degree of effectiveness. He should not retain AC under his control without viable AC mission requirements. The air mission commander must have the flexibility to shift idle AC to support other combat units, conduct required maintenance, or allow for crew rest. Plans to commit preplanned reaction forces should include provisions for their airlift to be on standby or alert status. The AATF commander makes the decision to release supporting aviation resources. The air mission commander ensures that the AATF commander is aware of subsequent or competing missions for his aviation resources. At times, the AATF commander needs to retain aviation support beyond the original time planned. In this case, he must inform higher headquarters immediately. The air mission commander continues to provide AC support until the AATF commander releases his unit.

**C-60.** The commander plans and organizes his CSS operations to support a rapid tempo of highly mobile and widely dispersed operations. Traditional doctrinal support distances and responsibilities do not always apply to air assault operations. The air assault logistics planner recognizes this from the outset and adapts the plan using available resources. Just as the commander tailors the AATF for combat operations by air, the logistics system must tailor itself to support by air. Medical evacuation, resupply, and reinforcement airlifts may be necessary to sustain the force's combat operations. Lift restrictions affect what can enter the airhead by helicopter. However, careful planning by the aviation staff provides methods for inserting reinforcements and most equipment lines and supplies.

## **EXECUTION OF AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS**

**C-61.** At the prescribed time, units move from the assembly area to the holding area via a route designated by the AATFC. Each unit commander notifies the PZ control party upon his unit's arrival in the holding area. The PZ control officer (PZCO) coordinates the arrival of (AC) and troops so that they arrive at their respective loading points just before the AC land. This prevents congestion, facilitates security, and reduces vulnerability to enemy actions during PZ operations.

**C-62.** When the AC are loaded and ready, the PZCO signals the flight leader. Lift-off should be at the time prescribed in the air-movement table. However, AC will not loiter in the PZ. If they are early, they lift off and later adjust their speed to cross the SP or first ACP on time.

**C-63.** The air movement commander predetermines the enroute flight speed and the flight leader paces the flight to ensure the flight crosses the SP on time. Commanders remain oriented throughout the flight. They do this by following and verifying the flight route using terrain observation, maps, global positioning systems, etc.

**C-64.** Attack helicopters and air cavalry assets assist in providing security for the air assault force. Under the control of the air mission commander, these helicopters provide reconnaissance of the routes and LZs, provide security for the lifting helicopters enroute to the LZ, and protect the lifted ground maneuver force as it assembles on the LZs and moves toward its objective. At the conclusion of the air assault phase of the mission, attack helicopters may remain OPCON to the ground maneuver force and provide reconnaissance and security operations in the objective area.

**C-65.** After passing the release point, serials proceed to assigned LZs. The RP crossing is used to time the lifting and shifting of fire support assets. The RP is also the point at which AC shift to LZ formation (if required) and the commander initiates preparatory fires.

**C-66.** Incendiary ordnance are not normally used on an LZ and its immediate vicinity just prior to landing because foliage fire and smoke could endanger AC or hamper the mission. However, helicopters equipped with smoke generators can be used to provide a smoke screen.

**C-67.** The AATF lands as planned unless last minute changes in the tactical situation force the commander to abort or alter the landing. Aviation crews keep soldiers in their aircraft informed of the situation, especially of any changes to the original plan. The commander wants his unit to land simultaneously to place the maximum number of soldiers on the ground in a given area in the shortest possible time. Individual soldiers are most vulnerable during landing; they disembark rapidly and deploy to carry out assigned missions.

**C-68.** At the LZ, leaders at each command echelon account for all personnel and equipment and submit appropriate reports to higher headquarters. After the unit completes its consolidation of the LZ, the commander reorganizes it as necessary. The ground combat operations of an air assault unit are no different from those conducted by other infantry units.

*"When the enemy is driven back, we have failed, and when he is cut off, encircled and dispersed, we have succeeded."*

Field Marshal Prince Aleksander V. Suvorov

## APPENDIX D

# ENCIRCLEMENT OPERATIONS

**Encirclement operations are operations where one force loses its freedom of maneuver because an opposing force is able to isolate it by controlling all ground lines of communications and reinforcement.** A unit involved in an encirclement can conduct offensive encirclement operations designed to isolate an enemy force or conduct defensive encirclement operations as a result of the unit's isolation by the actions of an opposing force. Encirclement operations occur because combat operations involving modernized forces are likely to be chaotic, intense, and highly destructive, extending across large areas containing relatively few units as each side maneuvers against the other to obtain positional advantage.

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## OFFENSIVE ENCIRCLEMENT OPERATIONS

**D-2.** The commander intends for his offensive encirclements to isolate an enemy force. Typically, encirclements result from penetrations and envelopments or are an extension of exploitation and pursuit operations. As such, they are not a separate form of offensive operations but an extension of an ongoing operation. They may be planned sequels or result from exploiting an unforeseen opportunity. They usually result from the linkup of two encircling arms conducting a double envelopment. However, they can occur in situations where the attacking commander uses a major obstacle, such as a shoreline, as a second encircling force. Although a commander may designate terrain objectives in an encirclement, isolation and defeat of enemy forces are the primary goals. Ideally, an encirclement results in the surrender of the encircled force. This minimizes the loss of friendly forces and the expenditure of resources.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**D-3.** An encirclement operation usually has at least two phases. The commander should consider adjusting his task organization between phases to maximize his unit's effectiveness.

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ness in each phase. The first phase is the conduct of the actual encirclement that results in the enemy force's isolation. The organization of forces for an encirclement is similar to that of a movement to contact or an envelopment. The commander executing an encirclement operation organizes his forces into a direct-pressure force and one or more encircling arms. Mounted, aviation, air assault, and airborne units are especially well-suited for use as an encircling arm since they have the tactical mobility to reach positions that cut enemy lines of communication. The presence of bypassed and encircled enemy forces on the flanks and rear of advancing friendly forces requires all-around security, which includes local security measures and security forces.

**D-4.** One commander should direct the entire encirclement effort. However, there must also be unity of command for each encircling arm. The encircling force headquarters may name one of its subordinate units as the headquarters for an encircling arm. Alternatively, the encircling force headquarters may create a temporary command post from its organic assets, such as its tactical command post, to control one or more arms of the encirclement. If that encircling arm has subordinate inner and outer arms, each of them also requires separate subordinate commanders. The missions and spatial orientation between the inner and outer encircling arms are sufficiently different; therefore, one force cannot be expected to act in both directions at once. (See Figure D-1.)

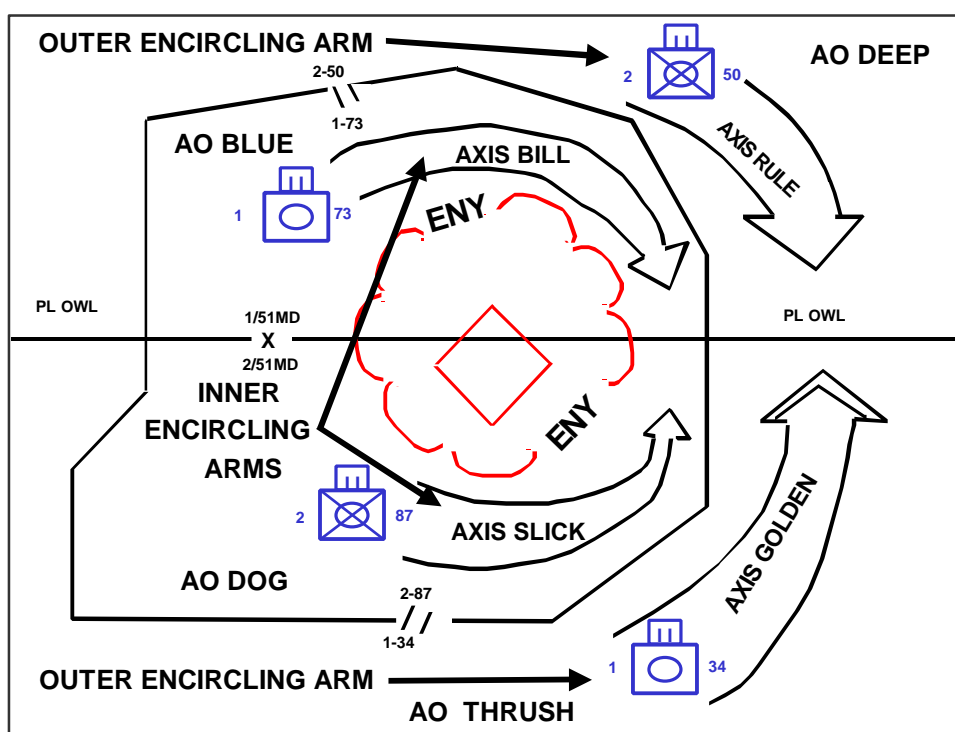


Figure D-1. Inner and Outer Arms of an Encirclement

**D-5.** The commander only organizes an inner encircling arm if there is no possibility of the encircled forces receiving relief from enemy forces outside the encirclement. If there is danger of an enemy relief force reaching the encircled enemy force, the commander organizes both inner and outer encircling arms. He assigns the outer encircling arm a security mission, an offensive mission to drive away any enemy relief force, or a defensive mission to prevent the enemy relief force from making contact with the encircled enemy force. Once the encirclement is complete these inner or outer encircling arms form a perimeter.

**D-6.** The second phase of an encirclement operation involves those actions taken against an isolated enemy. The commander's decision on whether to fix, contain, or destroy isolated enemy forces affects his task organization, as will enemy attempts to breakout from the encirclement or linkup with its encircled force. All these possible outcomes to the encirclement require resources in terms of units and supplies, but some require more resources than others. If the commander's mission is to contain or fix an isolated enemy, he organizes his force for defensive action and arranges them around the enemy's perimeter. If the commander's mission is to destroy that same enemy, he organizes his forces for offensive action. A higher commander often assigns either mission to the commander of a follow and support force.

**D-7.** Regardless of whether the commander decides to fix, contain, or destroy the enemy, he conducts reconnaissance operations to maintain contact and monitor enemy actions in response to the encirclement. This allows him to respond effectively to any enemy moves. The most effective reconnaissance combines ground, aerial, and surveillance systems to provide constant coverage and multiple assessments of enemy activities throughout the encircled area.

## CONTROL MEASURES

**D-8.** Control measures for an encirclement are similar to those of other offensive operations, especially an envelopment, but with a few additional considerations. (See Figure D-2.) If the commander uses both an inner and an outer encircling arm, he must establish a boundary between them. He should place the boundary so that each element has enough space to accomplish the mission. The inner force must have enough space to fight a defensive battle to prevent the encircled force from breaking out. The outer force must have adequate terrain and enough depth to its AO to defeat any attempt to relieve the encircled force.

**D-9.** The commander who controls both converging forces establishes a restricted fire line (RFL) between them. The commander may also establish a free fire area (FFA),

which encloses the area occupied by a bypassed or encircled enemy forces. (Chapter 3 discusses the use RFLs, FFAs, and other FSCM.)

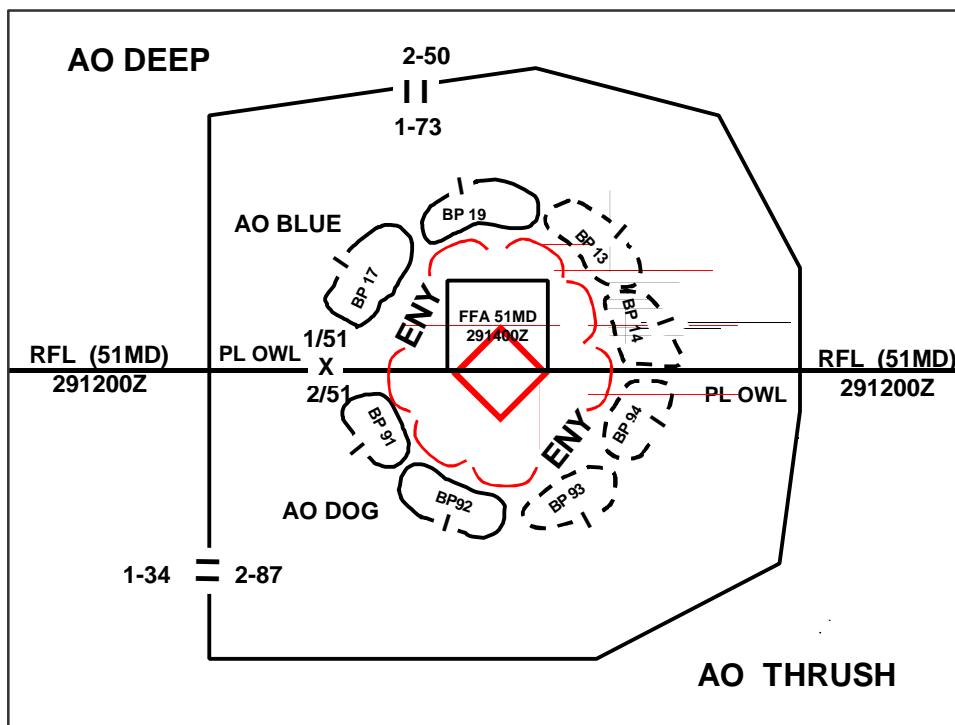


Figure D-2. Example Encirclement Control Measures

## PLANNING AN ENCIRCLEMENT

**D-10.** Encirclement operations may require the allocation of large forces and significant resources. They take a great deal of time and usually slow an advance. If the mission of the encircling force is to maintain contact with a bypassed enemy force, then the following general planning considerations apply:

- Determine the best available assets that gain and maintain contact with the enemy.
- Keep the enemy isolated and incapable of receiving intelligence, logistics, and fire support from enemy formations outside of the encirclement.
- Use your reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) assets so that you know the capabilities of the encircled forces and, as much as possible, its commander's intentions.
- Retain freedom of maneuver.

**D-11.** The commander applies the general defensive planning considerations outlined in Chapter 9 if the mission is to contain or fix the encircled enemy force in a given location. If the mission is to attack and destroy the encircled enemy force, he applies the planning considerations outlined in Chapters 4 and 6. Commanders should plan to rotate the

forces involved in the reduction of the encircled pocket to maintain constant pressure on the enemy.

**D-12.** Every encircled enemy unit reacts differently. Initially, some become demoralized and cannot offer any serious resistance. However, if left undisturbed, most enemy units recover and attempt to break out and regain contact with their main force or attack the flank and rear of advancing friendly units. The encircling force must plan for the enemy's most probable reactions.

**D-13.** If the enemy force is not reduced and it can be resupplied or it has access to considerable supply stocks, it continues to be a serious threat to the commander in future operations. The encircling force must be approximately equal in size to this type of encircled force to fix or contain it. This situation occurred when German forces occupied various fortified French ports after allied armies liberated the rest of France in 1944. Each encircled German division took approximately one allied division to maintain its isolation. Conversely, an enemy force isolated without adequate supplies either surrenders or faces containment by considerably smaller forces. This situation occurred in Egypt during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 when an Israeli division isolated the Egyptian 3<sup>rd</sup> Army.

**D-14.** Planning considerations for the linkup of encircling forces, such as command and control relationships, are outlined later in this appendix.

#### EXECUTION OF AN ENCIRCLEMENT

**D-15.** When feasible, the encircling force advances parallel to the enemy's direction of movement. It attempts to reach defiles, bridges, and other critical points before the main enemy force reaches them. When the encircling force cannot outdistance the enemy, it engages his flanks to force him to fight under the most unfavorable conditions possible, ultimately in two or more directions simultaneously. Engineer units rapidly breach obstacles in the encircling force's path. Friendly forces emplace obstacle complexes, supported by fires, to block probable avenues of escape as they counter attempted enemy breakouts from encirclement. The commander may use air assault and airborne forces to seize defiles or other critical terrain objectives to cut enemy lines of communication. He completes the encirclement when all enemy ground lines of communication are cut. This generally occurs when the two arms of a double envelopment complete their linkup.

**D-16.** Intervals between the advancing units of an enveloping force are likely. A commander creates them to provide protection from enemy weapons of mass destruction. They can also occur during combat operations as the result of different rates of advance by combat formations that face dissimilar degrees of enemy resistance. The encircled enemy



emy attempts to discover their presence and take advantage of them as he tries to escape from or breakout of the encirclement. Once the enveloping force completes the linkup that actually creates the encirclement, it must close these intervals as quickly as possible to prevent the enemy from exploiting them.

**D-17.** The enemy may attempt to cut off the encircling force as well as seek to extend his flank beyond the area of the friendly attack. If the commander attempts to outflank such a hostile extension, it may lead to his own over extension or to a dangerous separation of the enveloping force from any support. It is usually better to take advantage of the enemy's extension and subsequent weakness by penetrating his thinly held front than by overextending in an effort to completely outflank his position. Alternatively — in response to the unfolding encirclement — the enemy may attempt a frontal, spoiling attack. In this case, the friendly force in contact defends itself or engages in a delaying action while the enveloping force continues the envelopment or moves directly toward the enemy force in a counterattack.

**D-18.** The commander of a highly mobile force forming the inner encircling arm may choose not to establish a continuous series of positions around an encircled enemy. He may order his forces to occupy only key terrain from which they can strike at the encircled enemy to prevent him from concentrating forces and to further isolate him. To effectively isolate the enemy, a commander who adopts this technique must be able to detect enemy attempts to break out and concentrate sufficient combat power against these attempts to thwart them. The commander of the outer encircling arm prevents additional enemy forces outside the pocket from reinforcing the isolated enemy force or interfering with the activities of the inner encircling arm.

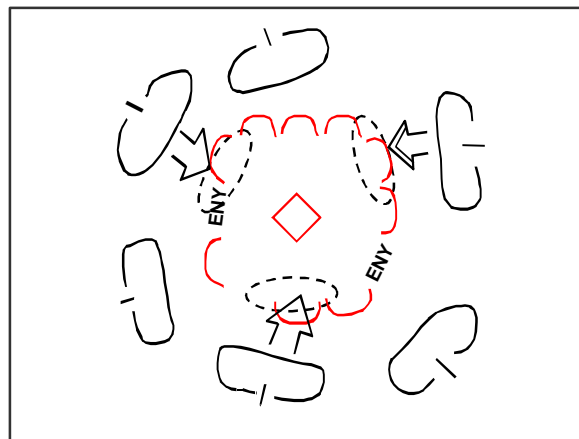
**D-19.** Other operations may result in the encirclement of enemy forces. These include offensive operations that bypass large enemy forces to maintain the force's momentum. Reconnaissance and security missions conducted by the main body must focus on detecting and reporting bypassed units. The main body should conduct these missions not only to its flanks, but also to its rear to discover if enemy forces move in behind them. Unit RISTA assets should watch for measures taken by the enemy's main body to relieve or assist its bypassed or encircled forces.

**D-20.** Once the commander decides to destroy an encircled enemy force, he reduces the enemy as rapidly as possible to free resources for use elsewhere. The reduction of an encircled enemy force should be conducted day and night without interruption, with the maximum concentration of forces and fires, until the encircled enemy force's complete destruction or surrender. A commander may destroy encircled enemy forces by fires

alone or by a combination of fire and movement. The five main methods for reducing an encircled enemy are: fire strike, squeeze, hammer and anvil, wedge, and escape route.

**D-21.** A fire strike — the massed, synchronized and nearly simultaneous delivery of precision-guided munitions — is the preferred method for destroying an encircled enemy force. The initial targets for these munitions are systems that present the greatest danger to the encircling force, such as the enemy's weapons of mass destruction, command posts, fire support and air defense systems, and field fortifications. However, the commander's ability to use precision-guided munitions in mass may be limited by the ability of the combat service support (CSS) system to supply them. Therefore, fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft and conventional artillery continue to play an important role in the destruction of encircled forces. Nonlethal fires, such as psychological operations and electronic warfare, are also employed against an encircled enemy force. In some situations, fire strikes result in the rapid destruction of the encircled enemy. However, destruction is not guaranteed. In most cases, reducing the enemy pocket requires the use of ground maneuver forces.

**D-22.** The *squeeze technique* involves the use of simultaneous, coordinated blows on the enemy from various directions. (See Figure D-3.) Following the initial encirclement, the capture or destruction of the enemy force is methodical and thorough. The commander uses fire and movement together in a controlled contraction of the encirclement.



**Figure D-3. Squeeze Technique**

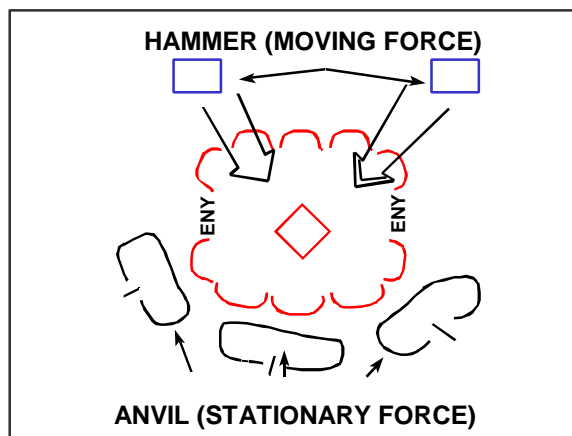
As the enemy's perimeter contracts, the commander removes units from the inner perimeter and adds them to his reserve depending on the terrain and other factors of METT-TC. This technique is effective against battalion or smaller-size groups of encircled enemy forces.

**D-23.** The squeeze technique promotes the enemy's confusion and rapid dispersion of his combat power; it does not enable him to use his reserves in a decisive manner. The commander should shape the operation by initially concentrating on destroying enemy command nodes, air defense systems, artillery systems, and CSS capabilities. These CSS

capabilities include any drop zones, landing zones, or airstrips available to the enemy that would allow him to receive support from outside the encirclement.

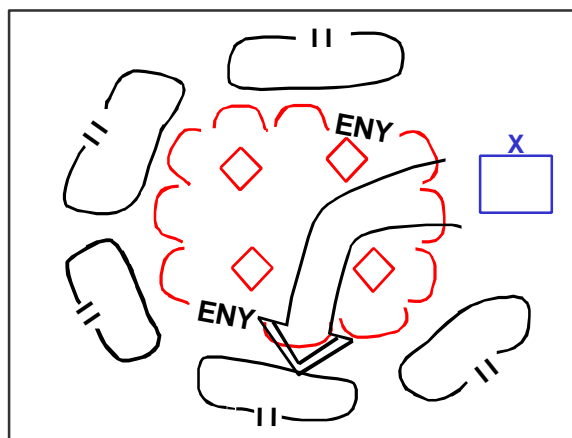
**D-24.** The *hammer and anvil technique* employs a stationary blocking force as an anvil on one or more sides of the inner perimeter while other elements of the encircling force use offensive action as a hammer to force the encircled enemy force against the blocking force. (See Figure D-4.) Either the anvil or the hammer can destroy the enemy, but usually the hammer, as the attacking element, accomplishes this task.

This technique is most effective when the blocking force is located on or to the rear of a natural terrain obstacle. On favorable terrain, an airborne or air assault force can be used as an anvil, or a blocking element.



**Figure D-4. Hammer and Anvil Technique**

**D-25.** The *wedge technique* use a unit to divide enemy forces within the pocket while the rest of the encircling force remains in place. (See Figure D-5.) The wedge technique allows the commander to concentrate against a small portion of the encircled enemy. However, the encircling force must maintain pressure on other enemy forces within the encirclement to prevent the enemy from reinforcing or supporting the threatened area.



**Figure D-5. Wedge Technique**

It is important that the unit dividing the pocket conduct sudden and swift attacks that take place simultaneously with the end of supporting preparatory fires.

**D-26.** The escape route technique involves leaving one or more gaps in the inner encircling arm to entice the enemy to attempt a breakout. Once the enemy is moving and is no longer sheltered in defensive positions, he is more vulnerable to acquisition, attack, and

destruction. A commander using this technique should use PSYOP to affect enemy morale and take constant offensive action to demoralize the escaping enemy force.

**D-27.** The negative aspect of these techniques is they require a considerable amount of forces and supplies, which are not always available. Therefore, at times the encircling force has to limit itself to less decisive measures. These include temporarily containing or fixing bypassed enemy forces until resources become available to enable the encircling force to destroy the enemy. Continued isolation of the encircled force can only be guaranteed when the enemy is deprived of the ability to strengthen his forces by inserting additional units and supplies by air. Even total, long-term isolation does not necessarily lead to decisive defeat of the encircled enemy. It is a temporary measure designed to provide the attacking force additional time.

## DEFENDING ENCIRCLED

**D-28.** An encircled force can continue to defend encircled, conduct a breakout toward other friendly forces, exfiltrate toward other friendly forces, or attack deeper into enemy-controlled territory. The commander's choice of maneuver once his unit becomes encircled depends on his senior commander's intent and the factors of METT-TC, including the:

- Availability of defensible terrain.
- Relative combat power of friendly and enemy forces.
- Logistics status of the encircled force and its ability to be resupplied, including the ability to treat and evacuate wounded soldiers.
- Morale and fighting capacity of the soldiers.

**D-29.** Encirclement of a friendly force is likely to occur during highly mobile fluid operations, or when operating in restricted terrain. A unit may find itself encircled as a result of its offensive actions — as a detachment left in contact — when defending a strongpoint, when occupying a combat outpost, or when defending an isolated defensive position. The commander must anticipate becoming encircled when he has a mission as a stay-behind force, or when he occupies either a strongpoint or a combat outpost. He must then make the necessary preparations.

**D-30.** The senior commander within an encirclement assumes command over all encircled forces and takes immediate action to protect them. It is recognized that in the confusion leading to an encirclement, it may be difficult to even determine what units are being encircled, let alone identify the senior commander. However, it is imperative that the higher commander designate that senior commander as quickly as possible. When that commander determines he is about to be encircled, he must decide quickly what assets stay and what assets leave. He immediately informs his superior of the situation.

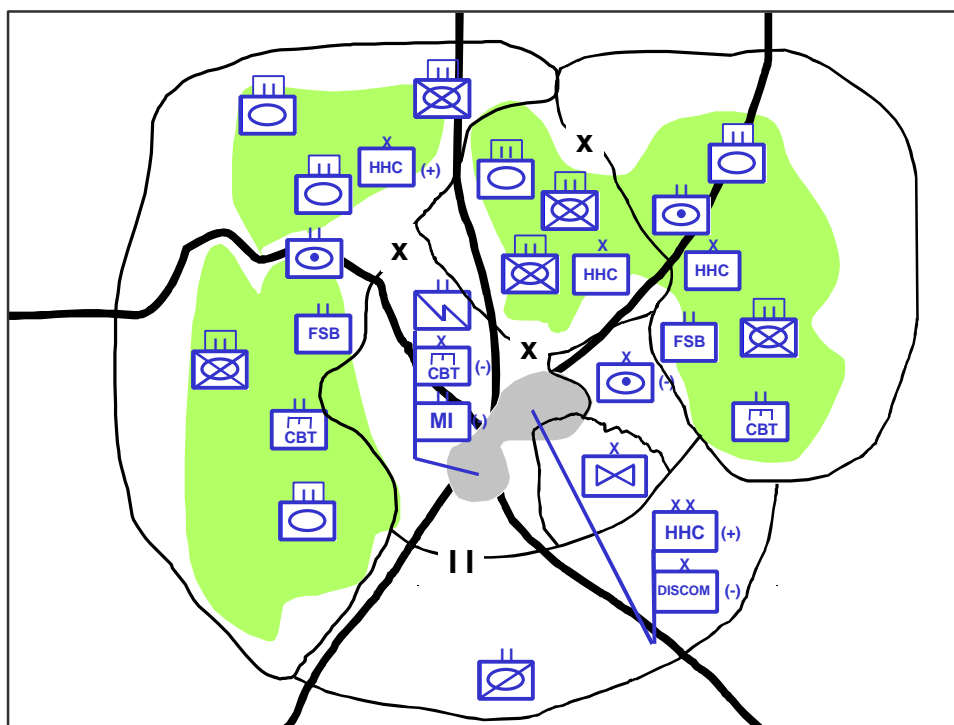
Simultaneously, he begins to accomplish the following tasks : establish security, reestablish a chain of command, establish a viable defense, and maintain morale.

**D-31.** The commander positions his security elements as far forward as possible to reestablish contact with the enemy and provide early warning. Vigorous patrolling begins immediately. Each unit clears its position to ensure that there are no enemy forces within the perimeter. Technical assets, such as JSTARS and EW systems, augment close-in security and also locate those areas along the perimeter where the enemy is deploying additional forces.

**D-32.** The commander reestablishes unity of command. He reorganizes any fragmented units and places soldiers separated from their parent units under the control of other units. He establishes a clear chain of command throughout the encircled force. He reestablishes communications with units outside the encirclement. He adjusts support relationships to reflect the new organization.

## ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

**D-33.** The commander of the encircled force establishes a perimeter defense. (Chapter 9 discusses the conduct of a perimeter defense.) He must be aware of the unique capabilities and limitations of the different units contained within the enemy encirclement. Therefore, he designs his defense to maximize the capabilities of his



**Figure D-6. Example of an Encircled Armor Division's Perimeter Defense**

available forces. Forward units establish mutually supporting positions around the perimeter and in depth along principal avenues of approach. Units occupy the best available defensible terrain. Sometimes it may be necessary to attack to seize key or decisive terrain so that it is incorporated within the perimeter defense. Once the commander assigns defensive areas of operations (AOs) and battle positions, preparations are the same as those used in the defense. (See Figure D-6.) Encircled units make their defensive positions as strong as possible given existing time and resource constraints. The defensive scheme must anticipate that the enemy will attempt to split the defenses of the encircled force and defeat it piecemeal.

**D-34.** The commander within the encirclement establishes a reserve. That reserve must have sufficient mobility to react in a timely manner. Therefore, given the availability of sufficient fuel, the commander uses armored and mechanized infantry units as his reserve. He centrally positions them to take advantage of interior lines. If only dismounted infantry forces are available, the commander should establish small local reserves to react to potential threats. He organizes a mobile antiarmor element from the best available antiarmor systems. If possible, subordinate echelons should also retain a reserve.

**D-35.** While defending encircled, the commander may use his reserve to limit penetrations along the perimeter. It may conduct spoiling attacks or vigorous counterattacks. He initiates a counterattack at the decisive moment and location as the enemy force attempts to penetrate the defensive positions.

**D-36.** Divisions and corps may consider relocating their aviation systems to locations that are not encircled. Aviation can rapidly bring additional firepower to bear on the encircling enemy force or rapidly move reaction forces to threatened locations along the defensive perimeter. Generally, aviation assets fly out of the encircled force area when it becomes small enough to allow the enemy's artillery to range throughout the area.

**D-37.** The commander centrally controls his fire support systems, such as artillery, to provide support at numerous points along the perimeter and mass the effects of his fires. Designating a FSCoord for all fire support systems is a technique for centrally controlling his fires. At lower levels, mortars from various units may be co-located under centralized control, especially if there are insufficient artillery assets. The encircled commander also centrally controls his air defense assets, ensuring that the forward units have sufficient short-range air defense coverage.

**D-38.** Generally, engineers concentrate on countermobility, then survivability. An encircled force is particularly vulnerable to the enemy's use of weapons of mass

destruction. Dispersal is difficult in a perimeter-type defense; therefore, the next best alternative is position hardening by the construction of field fortifications.

**D-39.** Encircled units must closely monitor their logistical assets, especially if they cannot be resupplied for an extended period. Conservation and centralized control of available resources are imperative. The commander may force his forward units to virtually cease all vehicle movement to allocate remaining fuel assets to the reserve. He retains essential combat service support (CSS) capabilities to sustain his operations. They fall under the control of a senior logistician. When possible, the commander positions these units and their assets out of the reach of potential penetrations in protected and concealed locations. The commander may incorporate other CSS units into defensive positions in depth or around key facilities. The commander may choose to use personnel from CSS units as fillers for combat units with an understanding of the impact of this action on his sustainment capabilities.

**D-40.** Casualty evacuation and graves registration pose a particular challenge for the encircled force. The commander evacuates his wounded from the encirclement whenever possible for humanitarian reasons and to reduce the logistical burden associated with providing long-term medical care to wounded soldiers.

**D-41.** Soldiers have an inherent fear of being encircled by the enemy. Unchecked, this fear can lead to a degradation in morale and discipline. When encircled — soldiers under the firm control of their leaders — can withstand the mental strain. Discipline can disintegrate rapidly in an encirclement. Officers and NCOs must uphold the highest standards of discipline. Their personal conduct sets the example. The commander must be seen frequently by his troops, and he must display a calm and confident manner.

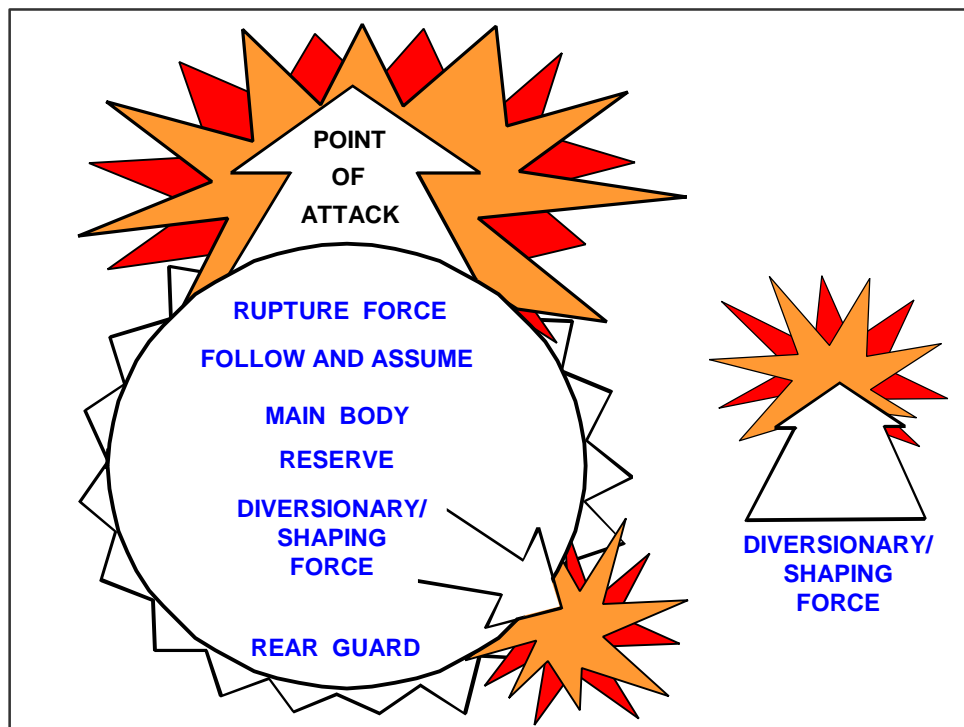
**D-42.** Soldiers in the encirclement must not regard their situation as desperate or hopeless. Commanders and leaders at all levels maintain the confidence of soldiers by resolute action and a positive attitude. They must keep soldiers informed to suppress rumors. The commander counters enemy PSYOP by conducting defensive information operations.

## **BREAKOUT FROM AN ENCIRCLEMENT**

**D-43.** A breakout is an offensive and a defensive operation. An encircled force normally attempts to conduct breakout operations when one of the following four conditions exist:

- The breakout is directed or falls within the intent of a higher commander.
- The encircled force does not have sufficient relative combat power to defend itself against enemy forces attempting to reduce the encirclement.

- The encircled force does not have adequate terrain available to conduct its defense.
- The encircled force cannot sustain itself for any length of time or until relieved by forces outside the encirclement.



**Figure D-7. Organization of Forces for a Breakout Operation**

#### **ORGANIZATION OF FORCES FOR A BREAKOUT**

**D-44.** Units typically task-organize into a rupture force, follow and assume force, main body, and rear guard to conduct a breakout attack. (Figure D-7). If sufficient forces exist within the encirclement, the commander can organize a reserve and a separate diversionary force from his available resources. The encircled force cannot be strong throughout its area. If sufficient combat power do not exist to resource each of these forces, the commander must prioritize which ones he will resource. Normally, his first priority is to resource the rupture force. He assigns the responsibilities of those unresourced forces to the forces he can resource. For example, the follow and assume force could receive a be prepared mission to help extract the rear guard; a mission generally given to the reserve. Forces located outside the encirclement can assist the breakout effort by conducting shaping operations. Above all else, the encircled force must maintain the momentum of the attack; otherwise, it will be more vulnerable to destruction than it was before the breakout attempt.



**D-45.** The force must reorganize based on available resources to conduct the breakout. Without resupply, armored and mechanized infantry units may not be able to move all of their vehicles during the breakout attack. Priority of support may be limited to the rupture force and the rear guard, with the remaining force keeping only sufficient transportation assets to move the wounded and critical assets and supplies. The breakout plan should outline the commander's destruction criteria for equipment or supplies left behind. All vehicles, supplies, such as critical munitions, and equipment that cannot be moved — less medical — should be destroyed as soon as possible.

**D-46.** An encircled force attacks by using the rupture force to penetrate the enemy defensive positions in at least one or possibly more locations. The commander must produce overwhelming combat power at these breakout points. The commander assigns the rupture force, which varies in size from one-third to two-thirds of the total encircled force, the mission to penetrate the enemy's encircling position, widen the gap, and hold the shoulders of the gap until all other encircled forces can move through. The rupture force must have sufficient strength to penetrate the enemy line. This force must use surprise, mobility, and firepower to achieve a favorable combat power ratio over the enemy at the point of attack. Chapter 4 discusses the penetration as a form of offensive maneuver.

**D-47.** Initially, the rupture force is the decisive operation. The attack occurs at a location where the commander anticipates a successful rupture of the enemy's inner ring, which facilitates subsequent operations by enabling the commander to attack enemy units from their flanks and rear. The rupture force commander most likely has additional assets attached to his unit, such as air defense assets or additional engineer personnel. The commander should integrate these assets to achieve the rupture.

**D-48.** The follow and assume force follows the rupture attack and is committed, as necessary, to maintain the momentum of the attack and secure objectives past the rupture. After the rupture force secures a gap in the enemy encirclement, the actions of the follow and assume force normally becomes the decisive operation until completion of linkup operations with another friendly force. When a unit receives a follow and assume mission in a breakout, its commander must coordinate closely with the rupture force commander regarding the location of the gap, the enemy situation at the rupture point, and the enemy situation, if known, along the direction of attack past the rupture point. The commander should not assign this force supporting tasks, such as clear routes and fix bypassed enemy forces, if those tasks would dissipate its available combat power. If the execution of these support tasks is vital to the success of the breakout, and resources

permit, the commander should designate a separate follow and support force to perform these tasks.

**D-49.** The main body consists of the main command post, the bulk of the CSS, the unit's casualties, and some CS assets. It contains those combat forces not required for other missions and has sufficient combat power to protect itself. The commander should place one individual in charge of the various elements of the main body to ensure orderly movement. Typically, the main body establishes some type of flank security force that deploys once the main body passes through the point of penetration and performs flank screen or a guard mission.

**D-50.** The rear guard consists of the personnel and equipment left on the perimeter to provide protection for the rupture attack and any shaping operations, such as diversionary forces. Forces left in contact must conduct a vigorous delaying action on the perimeter so that no portion of the rear guard is cut off. Under a single commander, the rear guard protects the main body from attack while it moves from the area. In addition to providing security, the rear guard deceives the enemy regarding the encircled force's intentions. It simulates the activities of the encircled force until the main body clears the gap.

**D-51.** The primary purpose of a reserve is to retain flexibility through offensive action. The commander makes every attempt to keep a small portion of the encircled force uncommitted to a specific course of action. He can then employ it at the decisive moment to ensure the success of the breakout. The situation may preclude him from establishing a separate reserve force because of the need to resource either the rupture force, the follow and assume force, or the rear guard. In this event, the commander assigns various prepared missions to the follow and assume force and prioritizes them.

**D-52.** A successful diversion is important to the success of any breakout operation. If the diversion fails to deceive the enemy regarding the encircled force's intentions, the enemy could direct his full combat power at the rupture point. On the other hand, the diversionary force may rupture the enemy's lines. If a rupture occurs, the commander of the force conducting a diversion must know the intent of the commander of the encircled force. The commander of an encircled force may choose to exploit the success of forces conducting a diversion or he may have to disengage them for use elsewhere in the breakout attempt.

#### **CONTROL MEASURES FOR A BREAKOUT**

**D-53.** As a minimum, a commander uses boundaries, a line of departure or line of contact, time of the attack, phase lines, axis of advance or direction of attack, objectives, and limit of advance to control and synchronize the breakout. Chapter 3 describes the use

of boundaries and phase lines. Chapter 4 discusses the use of axis of advance, direction of attack, objectives, line of departure or line of contact, limit of advance, and time of attack. The commander imposes only the amount of control measures necessary to synchronize the operations.

#### PLANNING FOR A BREAKOUT

**D-54.** The commander should initiate a breakout attack as quickly as possible after the enemy encircles his force. While detailed combat information about the enemy's disposition is probably not available, at that point in time the enemy is normally disorganized and is the least likely to respond in a coordinated manner. The enemy has not yet brought in sufficient combat power to encircle the friendly force in strength and weak points exist in the enemy's perimeter. However, sometimes he will attempt a breakout only after all other options fail.

**D-55.** Early in an encirclement, there are gaps or weaknesses in the enemy's encircling force. The commander uses his available RISTA assets to increase his situational understanding and determine enemy weak points. The commander plans for the breakout attack to capitalize on identified weak points. Although the resulting attack may be along a less direct route or over less favorable terrain, it is the best course of action because it avoids enemy strength and increases the chance for surprise.

**D-56.** An encircled force may be operating under adverse conditions and may not have all of its intelligence and surveillance systems operating. This forces the commander to operate with low levels of intelligence information regarding enemy strengths, weaknesses, and intentions. Within this environment, he should conduct aggressive reconnaissance to gather information on the enemy. The commander should also obtain information from long-range surveillance units, stay-behind units, and special operations forces in the area. If the enemy is in close contact, the commander may be forced to conduct a reconnaissance in force to ascertain information on enemy strengths. In either case, he must select a course of action quickly and develop a plan accordingly.

**D-57.** A shaping operation, such as a diversionary attack, can assist a breakout by diverting enemy attention and resources away from the rupture effort. The force conducting shaping operations may be located from either inside or outside the encirclement area. To be effective, the enemy must regard the efforts of this force as credible and a threat to the continuity of the enemy's maneuver plan. The commander should direct the force's efforts to a point where the enemy might expect a breakout or where a relief effort might occur. The diversionary force is as mobile as available

vehicles, fuel stocks, and trafficability allow so it can reposition to take part in the breakout or maneuver elsewhere to support the breakout. Mobile, self-propelled weapon systems suit the needs of forces conducting shaping operations. Additionally, the probability of a successful breakout increases measurably if another friendly force attacks toward the encircled force as it attempts to break out.

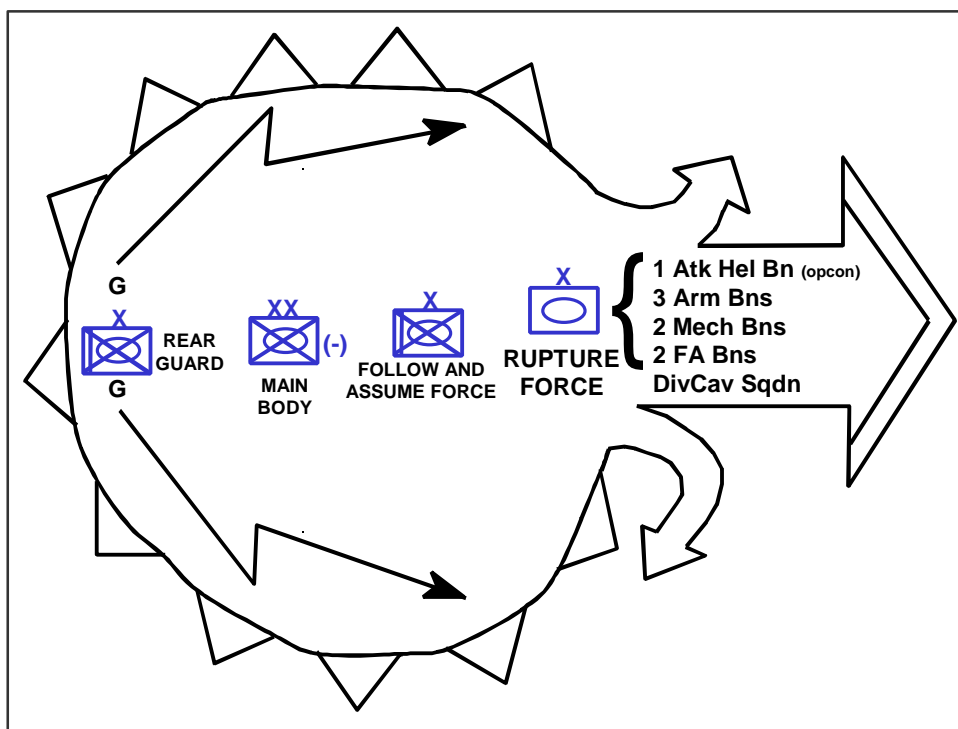
**D-58.** The commander conducts offensive information operations to assist the breakout attempt. Deception operations mislead the enemy about the encircled force's intentions, especially the location of the breakout attempt. If it is not possible to break out immediately, the commander attempts to deceive the enemy regarding the time and place of the breakout by concealing his preparations and changing positions. He can also give the appearance that the force will make a resolute stand and await relief.

**D-59.** He can use dummy radio traffic for the enemy to monitor or land lines that might be tapped to convey false information to the enemy. The breakout should not be along the obvious route toward friendly lines unless there is no other alternative. In this respect, the preparations for a breakout do not differ from the preparations for any other type or form of offensive operations. As in other offensive actions, secrecy, deception, and surprise are the basis for success. The other planning considerations for the breakout are the same as for any other attack.

#### EXECUTION OF A BREAKOUT

**D-60.** The commander exploits darkness and limited visibility during a breakout when his encircled forces have superior night operations capabilities. The cover of darkness, fog, smoke, or severe weather conditions favor the breakout because the weapons of the encircling enemy force are normally less effective in these conditions. The enemy has difficulty following the movements of the breakout force during conditions of limited visibility. However, if the encircled force commander waits for darkness or limited visibility, the enemy may have time to consolidate his containment positions. If friendly forces enjoy air superiority, they may initiate a breakout attack during daylight hours to fully exploit the capabilities of close air support.

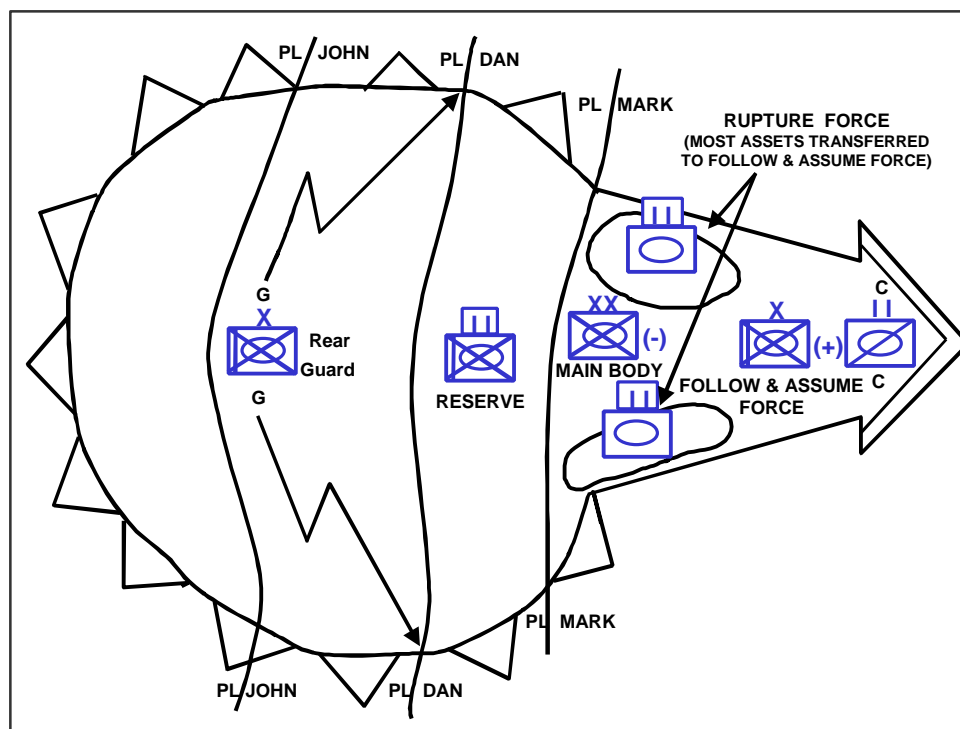
**D-61.** The unit takes all possible precautions to deceive the enemy regarding the location of the decisive operation. The rupture force minimizes occupation of attack positions prior to the start of the breakout. A commander may require the conduct one or more shaping operations to assist the rupture force in penetrating enemy positions and expanding the shoulders. He may use feints and demonstrations to deceive the enemy concerning the location and time of the decisive operation. However, diversionary attacks need not always occur first.



**Figure D-8. Example of a Breakout by an Encircled Mechanized Division**

**D-62.** The commander organizes and controls his rupture force as he would an attack or movement to contact. (See Figure D-8.) The rupture force generates overwhelming combat power at the point of penetration and attempts to rapidly penetrate enemy positions and expand the penetration. A commander hard-pressed to generate sufficient combat power for both the rupture force and the perimeter defense can thin his defensive perimeter in certain areas by using a detachment left in contact (DLIC) in conjunction with a withdrawal prior to executing the attack to generate the needed combat power. He may also shorten the perimeter's length, which reduces the size of the area occupied by the encircled force.

**D-63.** If enemy forces at the point of penetration have roughly the same combat power as the rupture force, the commander orders the rupture force to hold the shoulders of the penetration while the follow and assume force moves forward and its actions become the decisive operation. (See Figure D-9.) If the enemy is not in strength, the commander may have the rupture force continue its attack. If there are no identified enemy formations beyond the penetration, the rupture force may transition to a movement to contact. After the encircled friendly force breaks out of its encirclement, it moves toward other friendly forces and links up with them. The next section addresses the control measures and considerations associated with conducting a linkup.



**Figure D-9. Example of a Breakout by an Encircled Mechanized Division (continued)**

**D-64.** Initially the follow and assume force passes through the gap created by the rupture force. It is essential that this force continues to move rapidly from the encircled area toward its final objective. If the follow and assume force becomes the encircled commander's decisive operation, it cannot allow itself to become bogged down. Preparatory fires by artillery, Army aviation, close air support (CAS), and air interdiction (AI) may assist the follow and assume force in maintaining momentum out of the encircled area.

**D-65.** Once the breakout attack begins, the rear guard and any diversion forces disengage or delay toward the area of the rupture. Perimeter forces integrate smoothly into the rear of the breakout column. The commander shifts his priority of fires as required by the factors of METT-TC once the breakout occurs.

**D-66.** As other encircled units support or move through the area where the penetration occurred, the rear guard commander must spread his forces over an extended area. This requires flexibility and mobility by the rear guard. The perimeter must withstand enemy pressure. If the enemy succeeds in destroying or encircling the original rear guard in the breakout process, the commander must reconstitute a new rear guard.

**D-67.** The main body follows the follow and assume force. It moves rapidly as a single unit on multiple routes in an approach or road march formation immediately behind the

follow and assume force, protected on its flanks by security elements. It contains sufficient combat power to protect itself and reinforce the flank or rear security forces if they come under attack.

**D-68.** Normally, the rear guard initially conducts a withdrawal to break contact with the enemy forces around the perimeter. It contracts the perimeter as it delays back behind the main body. If the enemy closely pursues the breakout force, the efforts of the rear guard may become the encircled force's decisive operation. The commander should position the reserve where it can also support the rear guard.

**D-69.** Initially, the priority for fire support is with the rupture force. Fire support assets move as part of the main body and rear guard so security forces have adequate fire support. Target identification difficulties resulting from close proximity and intermixing of forces, as well as the rapidly changing ground situation during the execution of a breakout, makes the provision of close air support difficult.

**D-70.** Engineers with the rupture force focus on mobility operations. Engineers with the follow and assume force or the reserve improve routes as necessary. Engineers supporting flank security elements focus on the conduct of countermobility operations. The rear guard must also have adequate engineers to conduct countermobility operations.

**D-71.** The commander prioritizes his air defense assets to protect the rupture force, the rear guard, and then the main body. The rear guard is second in priority of protection to help prevent it from being overrun by an enemy pursuit targeted at the main body. The commander must dedicate air defense systems to cover critical points through which the encircled force will pass.

**D-72.** The commander can relieve his logistics shortfalls by using aerial resupply, by ordering external forces to establish support areas, and by using captured supplies. All units and vehicles carry the maximum supplies possible with emphasis on carrying Class III and V. The encircled force only takes those vehicles it can support. It may be possible for the encircled force's higher headquarters to establish an intermediate support base as the breakout attack moves toward a linkup.

## EXFILTRATION

**D-73.** If the success of a breakout attack appears questionable, or if it fails and a relief operation is not planned, one way to preserve a portion of the force might be through organized exfiltration. Exfiltration is a tactical task described in Appendix B.

## ATTACKING DEEPER INTO ENEMY TERRITORY

**D-74.** A course of action that the enemy is not likely to expect from an encircled force is to attack deeper to seize key terrain. It involves great risk but may offer the only feasible

ble course of action under some circumstances. These circumstances include when the enemy denies the encircled force other routes back to friendly lines and attacking deeper positions the encircled unit in a location where it can be extracted by other ground, naval and air forces. It is only feasible if a unit can sustain itself while isolated, although that sustainment can come from aerial resupply and enemy supply stocks.

**D-75.** When the enemy is attacking, an encircled friendly force that attacks deeper into the enemy rear may disrupt the enemy's offense and provide an opportunity for linkup from another direction. If the enemy is defending and the attacking force finds itself isolated through its own offensive action, it may continue the attack toward its assigned objective or a new objective located on more favorable defensive terrain.

## LINKUP

**D-76. A linkup is a meeting of friendly ground forces, which occurs in a variety of circumstances.** It happens when an advancing force reaches an objective area previously seized by an airborne or air assault; when an encircled element breaks out to rejoin friendly forces or a force comes to the relief of an encircled force; and when converging maneuver forces meet. Both forces may be moving toward each other or one may be stationary. Whenever possible, joining forces exchange as much information as possible prior to starting an operation.

**D-77.** The headquarters ordering the linkup establishes:

- Common situational understanding.
- Command relationship and responsibilities of each force before, during, and after linkup.
- Coordination of fire support before, during, and after linkup, including control measures.
- Linkup method.
- Near and far recognition signals and communications procedures to use, including pyrotechnics, armbands, vehicle markings, gun-tube orientation, panels, colored smoke, lights, and challenge and passwords.
- Operations to conduct following linkup.

## CONTROL MEASURES FOR LINKUP

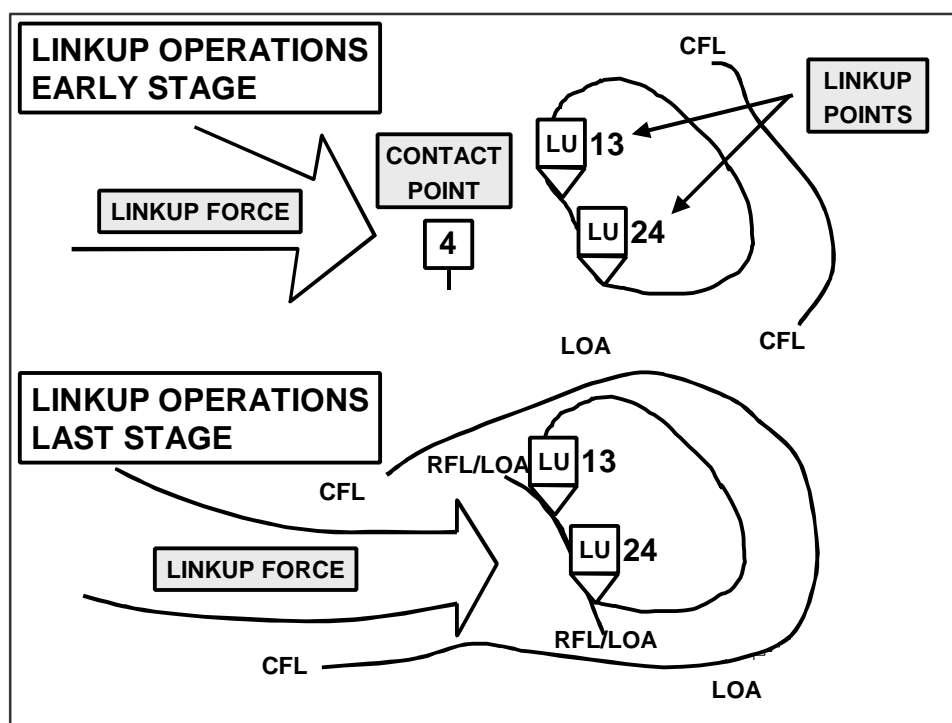
**D-78.** The commander establishes minimum control measures for units conducting a linkup. He assigns each unit an AO defined by lateral boundaries and a restricted fire line (RLF) that also acts as a limit of advance (LOA). The commander establishes a no fire area (NFA) around one or both forces. He establishes a coordinated fire line (CFL) beyond the area where the two forces link up. The forces conducting the linkup use the linkup points established by the commander to initiate physical contact between the forces. The commander designates alternate linkup points since enemy action may inte r-



fere with the primary linkup points. He adjusts such control measures during the operation to provide for freedom of action as well as positive control.

## EXECUTION

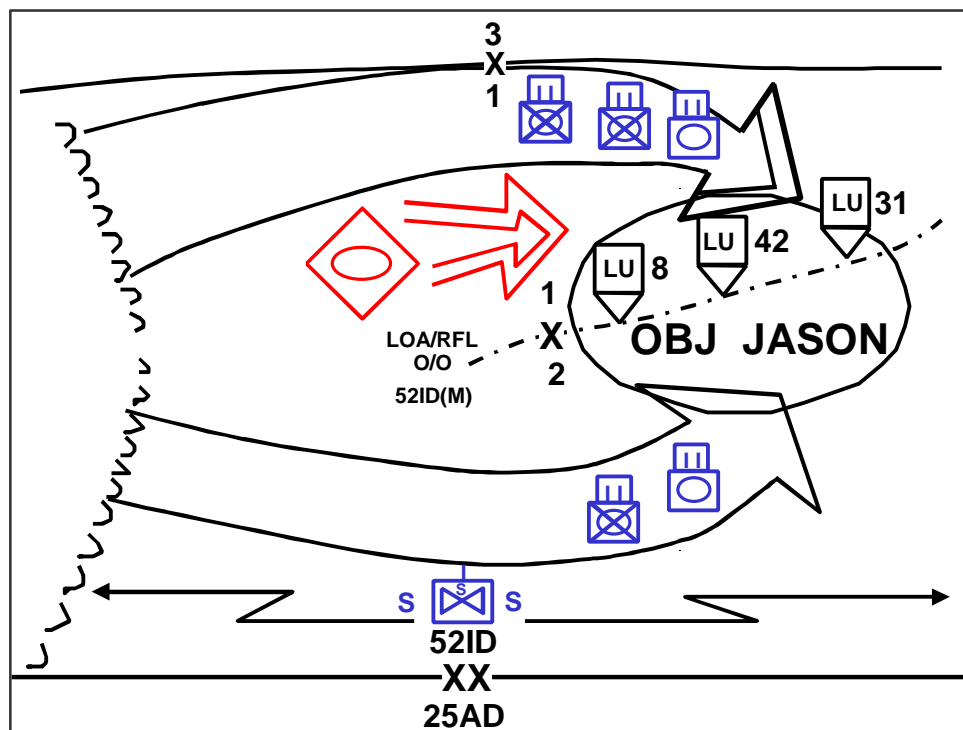
**D-79.** There are two methods of conducting a linkup. The preferred method is when the moving force has an assigned LOA near the other force and conducts the linkup at predetermined contact points. Units then coordinate further operations. The commander uses the other method during highly fluid mobile operations when the enemy force is escaping from a potential encirclement or when one of the forces involved in the linkup is at risk and requires immediate reinforcement. In this method, the moving force continues to move and conduct long-range recognition via FM radios or other measures, stopping only when it makes physical contact with the other force.



**Figure D-10. Linkup of a Moving Force and a Stationary Force**

**D-80.** When one of the units involved is stationary, the commander usually locates the linkup points near the RFL/LOA. (See Figure D-10.) The linkup points are also located near the stationary force's security elements. Stationary forces assist in the linkup by opening lanes in minefields, breaching or removing selected obstacles, furnishing guides, and designating assembly areas. When a moving force is coming to relieve an encircled

force, it brings additional logistics assets to restore the encircled unit's combat effectiveness.



**Figure D-11. Linkup of Two Moving Forces**

ness to the desired level.

**D-81.** Linkup between two moving units is one of the most difficult operations. The commander establishes a limit of advance to prevent fratricide. He establishes primary and alternate linkup points for the moving forces in the vicinity of the limit of advance. Fire support considerations are similar to when a stationary and moving force link up. Leading elements of each force should exchange liaison teams and be on a common radio net. (See Figure D-11.)

**D-82.** The commander must carefully coordinate linkup operation with forces of other nations. This is especially true if the two armies are not both members of the same alliance with established internationally standardized procedures, or if the units involved have not previously established the necessary procedures.

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